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# A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

TO

*CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE.*

Third Series.

AGAINST ARIANISM.

PART I.

St. Athanasius.

(Lib. h. 1)

BY

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE malicious attempts of the Kingdom of Darkness to destroy the infant Church in its cradle by persecution signally failed ; and fell out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel. Another, and it must be confessed, more fatal attack followed next in succession. No effort was spared to corrupt and subvert the Catholic Faith. Multitudes were led astray into the paths of error, and the stability of the Christian Religion seemed for a time to be shaken. The progress of it in the world was beyond all question retarded. But Divine Providence, which brings good out of evil, made heresy the occasion of more accurately defining Christian doctrine. The bulwarks of the faith were strengthened : articles more distinctly affirming the vital truths assailed, were added to the Creed.

It may perhaps be expedient to inform the reader, that where, in these abridgements, the words of the Athanasian Creed are used, it is not

to be supposed that those very words occur in the treatise itself ; but they are employed only because it did not appear how in any other way the meaning of St. Athanasius could be so succinctly and clearly expressed.

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# A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

## TO CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE.

THIRD SERIES.

### AGAINST ARIANISM.



#### Introductory Chapter.

##### I.

BEFORE attempting to describe the Life and Testimony of some of the most illustrious of the Defenders of the Catholic Faith, and Witnesses to Divine Truth, against the deadly errors of the Arians, it will be expedient, in the first place, to define, as plainly and accurately as may be possible, what Arianism is ; and, secondly, to draw a brief biographical sketch of the author of it, that is to say, of Arius himself, the arch-heretic, after whom the heresy is named.

The popular conception of the term "heresy" is incorrect and misleading. Most people when they speak of heresy, intend to signify some false doctrine or misbelief of so serious and fundamental a character as to separate those who hold it from any title to Christian fellowship : whereas by schism they mean a difference of opinion upon



minor and less essential points ; or, in other words, heresy, according to the common acceptance of the expression, denotes separation from the Church ; and schism, division within the bosom of the Church herself.

Attention to the language of our Liturgy would teach us better. It is not denied that sometimes in Holy Scripture, heresy and schism are convertible terms. But according to the strict theological use of the words there is a distinction. In the Litany we find the whole subject stated in the most lucid and explicit manner. We are taught to pray to the good Lord to deliver us from "all false doctrine, heresy, and schism." Here the whole matter is laid open before us, and we see the evil which is deprecated, advancing in regular progression. There is, first, false doctrine ; next there is heresy ; and, finally, heresy develops into schism.

The initial step in this disastrous path is taken, when some person, affecting singularity, conceives and utters such private interpretations of Holy Scripture, and peculiar ideas of his own about religious subjects, as are incongruous to the Catholic Faith. Thus false doctrine originates. But he goes on to disseminate his views, and to form a party like-minded with himself. A heresy is made, according to the proper etymology of the word, by pickers and choosers of their belief. This is the second step. The last step is taken when they withdraw from their fellow-Christians, and separate themselves from the rest of the Church, setting up



a particular communion consisting of members of their sect. A schism now takes place.

It shall be our endeavour, as clearly as a brief space will allow, to trace Arianism through the several stages of false doctrine, heresy, and schism.

Ill weeds do not grow and spread, except in a congenial soil, and under circumstances that allow them to flourish. But the state of the Church, at the period under review, rendered it, unhappily, practicable to assail, with some prospect of success, the most fundamental and essential principle of true religion. The opportunity was not likely to be missed by the watchful enemy of all righteousness. There exists, always, in the corrupt heart of man, and in his pride and hardness, an indisposition to receive with meekness the truths of Divine revelation. Things which are above human understanding, mankind is wont to regard, and to treat, as if they were contrary to reason. Errors of many kinds had arisen before. When the sublime doctrine of the Gospel came into contact with the paganism then prevalent in the world, perverse ingenuity had tried to distort and misrepresent it. Hitherto, however, the Church had thrown off those pernicious delusions, and they had made no lodgment within her borders.

But the fire of love, which the preaching of the Gospel had kindled in the souls of believers, was burning less brightly; the holy fervour was abating; earthly affections were regaining their influence. The powers of the world were less violently set against the Church than they had

been before ; kings and rulers looked upon the new religion (for such they deemed it), which was spreading far and wide over the face of the globe, with a more favourable eye. And as the friendship of the world, towards the Church, increased, her vigilance relaxed, and her purity of heart declined. Then, as she grew less pure in heart, she saw God and the things of God more dimly. Her spiritual vision became impaired.

Moreover, the spirit of human philosophy widely prevailed. Men were fond of speculating about the nature of God, about the manner in which all things came into being, about the mutual relations of mind and matter, about metaphysics, and of indulging in similar intellectual exercises. And they were reluctant to receive anything for truth which their understanding could not grasp, and which transcended the bounds of their powers of thought. They refused to be satisfied with any teaching which they were unable to reduce to the rules of a scientifically logical system. From this tendency the Church was not free, and the prejudicial influence of it upon the sublime doctrines of Divine revelation is too obvious to need demonstration. Zophar the Naamathite in the Book of Job said truly, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" (Job xi. 7-8).

The truth of God must be received with the docile and lowly spirit of a little child. The basis



of sound and sure faith can be laid only in humility. For the truth of God is taught by God, and "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter v. 5). But sinful man is proud. Hence the spirit of faith and the spirit of error must stand opposed the one to the other, as long as the world shall last. Faith remains ever the same; it alters not; it cannot change, because the object of it is unchangeable. But error assumes various forms, according to the complexion of the age in which it arises. When Arianism began, the Church stood face to face with the several systems, which divers nations had adopted, of pagan idolatry and pagan philosophical theology. The multitude worshipped gods many, and lords many. The wiser and more reflective philosophers, while allowing and practising polytheism, held nevertheless that there was one supreme, self-existent, unoriginated God. The other gods they considered to be produced by Him, and to be inferior to Him: inferior, that is to say, in nature, as a creature is inferior to the Creator. They were gods, and to be worshipped as such; but they were different from, and inferior to, the supreme God. Now, if it could be shown that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was not "equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead" (Athanasian Creed), one and the same God with Him, but another and an inferior God; in that case, paganism and Christianity might be reconciled, and the principal difference between them would disappear. The modern sceptic impugns the authority of Holy



Scripture, and rejects it when he cannot reconcile it to his own reason. The Arian did not venture to deny the Divine Authority of the written Revelation, so he misinterpreted it ; he took the words of the Bible and rationalized about them, putting his own meaning upon them, and explaining them after his own fashion.

This subtle attack upon the Christian Faith was confronted and frustrated by the doctrine of the Ever-blessed and Glorious Trinity, the three Persons and One God ; the Son begotten of the Father by Eternal Generation ; the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son by Eternal Procession ; not as if there ever was, or ever could be, any change in the nature of the Godhead ; nor yet as if, although every person by Himself is God and Lord, the Three Persons were not altogether and in every respect one and the same God. The Arians might be willing, as, indeed, they were, to leave out of consideration all ideas associated with time ; they might consent, as they offered to do, to accept any statement of belief framed solely in the language of Holy Scripture ; this last was actually one of their most dangerous and deluding artifices ; but whilst they hesitated or refused to confess belief in the One Substance, and to acknowledge the glory of each of the Three Divine Persons to be the same, without any difference or inequality, the root of their heresy remained unextirpated. Defection from the truth, in this instance, as in others, admits, of course, of degrees. Your position upon an in-

clined plane is very different when you stand at the top or at the bottom ; but even at the top your feet are going down the slope. The severance of a branch from the tree may be at first by the smallest possible crack, but the vital connection is virtually sundered. The individual himself may be unconscious of the greatness of his peril. Hence there have been, and there are, teachers with Arian tendencies, who, as well as their followers, fail to perceive the fatal end towards which their imaginations are leading them. Heretics, personally, may not, perhaps, be chargeable with all the consequences of their opinions ; but the heresy itself is justly held to be answerable for all the mischief in which it does or can ultimately result. Often the real character of error is with difficulty perceivable at the commencement. The tares and the wheat look much alike, when they begin to grow. And so it was with the matter of which we are now treating. But a serious and devout mind will soon detect the fatal issues of the fault, and will see that it destroys the foundation upon which Christian Faith rests ; and history and experience will show that whenever there is divergence from true belief, a lower standard of Christian duty and morality inevitably ensues. It cannot be otherwise, for if the spring be poisoned the waters that flow from it must be unwholesome. Possibly, however, a long time may elapse, perhaps even several generations, before the sinister effects arrive at their full development.



## Introductory Chapter.

### II.

THE essential and irreconcilable difference between Arianism and the Divinely taught doctrine of the Holy Church having been pointed out, it seems desirable to give a brief account of the great heresiarch himself. Yet about the early life of Arius very little is known. He was born at Cyrenaica in Africa ; and educated at Antioch in the school of Lucian. Here probably originated those tendencies which, in their ultimate issue, subsequently made his name so unhappily notorious. Thus, in the city where the disciples of the Blessed Jesus were first called Christians (Acts xi. 26), the denial on the part of those who profess that sacred name of the Divinity of their Lord may be traced to its source. Truly we see here a remarkable instance of the enemy coming into the field of God, and sowing tares among the wheat.

The personality of Arius was imposing, and such as is wont to command attention and deference amongst men. His stature was tall, his aspect grave, his life and conversation austere, his learning extensive, his dialectical skill great, his intellect cultivated and acute. But together, with all these advantages, natural and acquired, his character was of that description which is sure to



go wrong; for his spirit was aspiring and ambitious, his mind haughty and jealous, he was impatient of contradiction, unwilling to accept in humble faith the truth of Divine mysteries, which exceed all human power of comprehension, much more of explanation; and he was, as men like him are apt to be, puffed up with self-importance, and inflamed with angry resentment when they see another preferred to high place instead of themselves. To the last-mentioned cause may be attributed in the first instance his animosity against Alexander, the Archbishop of Alexandria.

Thither Arius had come from Antioch. At the period in question the Church at Alexandria was the most illustrious in the world for learning and philosophy. Yet the philosophy there cultivated did not lead in the direction of the errors which Arius afterwards held and taught. His position there was one of authority and dignity. For in its ecclesiastical arrangements the Church of Alexandria was distinguished in some particulars from other Churches. The usual custom at that time was for the clergy of the principal Church to serve the dependent Churches amongst them, without placing one priest in charge of one particular cure. But at Alexandria special pastors were appointed for the several districts; so that they resembled the ministers upon whom is conferred the management of an English parish. Upon Arius had been bestowed the Church of Baucalis.

The occurrence of the Meletian schism first

afforded him an opportunity, which he eagerly seized, of making himself conspicuous and of giving trouble to his diocesan. Meletius, an Egyptian Bishop, had with some others recanted in the Diocletian persecution in order to save his life. He was, in consequence, deposed by Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria. He then separated himself from the Church, formed a party of his own, and ordained ministers for it. This unlawful exercise of his function was, it need hardly be said, invalid. Arius warmly espoused the Meletian cause. But some time afterwards reconciled himself to Peter, who thereupon ordained him deacon. Soon, however, he took upon him to condemn Peter for undue severity in rejecting Meletian Baptism. Exhibiting in this and in other matters a restless and factious disposition, he was expelled from the Church. Peter did not live to see further proofs of the turbulent and contentious spirit of his deacon ; for the good man himself was quickly after called to his rest by martyrdom.

He was succeeded in the Alexandrian See by Achillas. Understanding and capacity, such as Arius unquestionably possessed, always enable a man to keep himself from being overlooked. And being desirous of professional advancement, he made submissions to his ecclesiastical superior which induced the new occupant of the Bishopric to grant him admission to the order of priesthood. He was naturally qualified to beguile and captivate, and to ingratiate himself with persons whose favour he wished to obtain.



Achillas was followed by Alexander, and now the heretic waxed bolder in publishing his dangerous speculations. Reluctant to provoke him by public censure, Alexander forbore rebuke. But after a while his toleration of such opinions was found fault with in the Church, and he found himself obliged to take notice of them. In the presence of his clergy, and of Arius himself, he made an emphatic and explicit affirmation that the Catholic Faith required the worship of one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. To this declaration of belief, Arius replied by charging the Archbishop with Sabellianism. The controversy grew, and spread among all classes of people. Alexander, cautious and deliberate in his proceedings, tried by argument and by lenient measures to settle the dispute and restore peace. But failing in his well-meant efforts, he at last found it necessary to bring the matter before a synod of Bishops summoned for the purpose. They met, therefore, and the doctrines of Arius were condemned ; he himself, together with nine of his adherents, being expelled from the Church.

The affair had hitherto been confined to one place, henceforward it assumed larger proportions, and became a matter of universal interest ; religious strife disturbed and distressed every part of the Christian world ; the contention waxed so hot and violent as to trouble the peace of the Empire, and to call for the intervention of the Government. For Arius and his followers, wherever they went, sought by every means in their power to advance

the interests of their cause : they courted popular, and especially imperial and influential favour, and spared not to asperse their opponents. They won over to their side a powerful patron in the person of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia. A better man, Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarsa, the ecclesiastical historian, also inclined towards them. He did not, it is true, go the whole length that Arius went ; but appears to have taken up a middle position. As nearly as they can be ascertained, his views coincided with those held and expressed in the last century by Dr. Samuel Clark, and by others since, which are commonly called high Arianism. These teachers admitted that the Son of God was from eternity, but not that He is Jehovah, and "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead" (Athanasian Creed). This is doubtless the most specious of all heresies ; but it is heresy. Two questions its defenders seem to be incapable of answering ; first, Why Christ is so often, in Scripture, called Jehovah, the self-existent God ? Secondly, How they can clear themselves of the charge of holding more gods than one ? Such views, moreover, however subtly they may be insinuated, cannot be reconciled with the great truths Divinely revealed concerning sin and redemption. They undermine, they remove and take away the foundation upon which Christian faith and hope repose.

In the year 324 A.D. the Emperor Constantine was at Nicomedia, and intended to make a further progress into the East. The news, however, of these contentions hindered him from carrying his



design into effect. This fact, by itself, shows that the concerns of the Christian Church had now grown to be of great importance. The Emperor desired to restore tranquillity, and he wrote both to Alexander and to Arius, expressing his desire of their agreement. He sent the letters by Hosius, Bishop of Corduba, a prelate eminent for faith and piety, who had been distinguished for his firmness and sufferings in the recent persecutions. Hosius endeavoured to heal the breach, but found it to be impossible: for peace, even in outward semblance, could now only be preserved at the expense of truth.

Constantine then took the resolution, with the view of terminating the controversy, of summoning the aid of the whole Christian Church. In this way the famous Council of Nice, or Nicæa, was assembled. Several matters of more or less importance were there discussed and settled; but the principal business transacted at this Council was the consideration of Arianism. Three hundred and eighteen Bishops came together to it; and many of them were Confessors, who had suffered wounds and maiming in the time of persecution. Many priests also were present. In attendance upon Alexander was his deacon, Athanasius, soon to become the foremost champion of the truth. The total number of persons at the Council was about six hundred. The president was the venerable Hosius. The members were transported thither in public conveyances at the Emperor's expense, and maintained at his cost while they remained there. This took place in the year 325 A.D.

The fathers of the Council concluded and decreed that the Catholic Faith required, as necessary to salvation, belief in the Divinity of Christ, and that He is of One Substance with the Father. The creed called the Nicene Creed, in the main as we have it now, was drawn up, and declared to express the true faith of the Church according to the doctrine of Holy Scripture. Arius and his associates were condemned, deposed, excommunicated, and forbidden to enter Alexandria, and banished into Illyricum.

Five months after his return from the Council, Alexander, the Archbishop of Alexandria died. Before his death he had desired that Athanasius might be appointed his successor. The people of the city concurred in the request. And though not more than twenty-eight years of age, and unwilling to undertake so weighty a charge, he was consecrated to the See. He held it for forty-six years. During the whole of that time, with little intermission, he was persecuted by the Arians.

After the death of his mother, Helena, Constantine fell under the influence of his sister Constantia, who was guided by a priest secretly in the Arian interest. By her entreaties on her death-bed she persuaded the Emperor that the Arians had been unjustly condemned, and induced him to remove the penalties which had been imposed upon them. Being beguiled by the ambiguous craft of Arius and his friend Euzoius, he wrote in their favour to the Churches. Eusebius, of Nicomedia, and Theognis, of Nice, by owning the



Nicene faith in words, while yet reserving to themselves their own interpretation of the words, were restored to their Sees. It was, indeed, one of the most specious and plausible of the subterfuges resorted to by the Arians, that they would agree to the words of the Creed, and even assert their willingness to subscribe to any formula expressed in the language of Holy Scripture : but they would not accept the Creeds with the orthodox interpretation, or the language of the Scripture in the sense which the Holy Ghost taught the Church to put upon it. Yet words without their proper meaning are nothing, and in respect of Holy Scripture it is the meaning of Scripture which is Scripture. The Arian devices and refuges of lies were endless. Amongst his other crafty ways of defending and propagating his doctrines, Arius published a book called "Thalia," a miscellany composed of pieces in poetry and prose ; and also a collection of songs for sailors, millers, and pilgrims. Arius now, at the same time with the others, returned from banishment ; and Eusebius, of Nicomedia, wrote to Athanasius to receive him to Communion. But he made the request in vain, for the noble and saintly defender of the Faith could not compromise his principles, or sport with subscriptions and bonds after the manner of his adversaries.

By means of solicitation and false representations the mind of the Emperor was so greatly prejudiced against Athanasius, that he ordered a Council to be convened at Tyre for the purpose of

instituting an inquiry whether various crimes of which he was accused, had really been committed. The calumnies were so base as to be in the judgment of any candid mind absolutely incredible and absurd. For they charged this holy man with rebellion, oppression, rape, and murder. Egypt, where Athanasius must have been best known, was faithful to her metropolitan. Forty-seven Bishops of that country entered a protest against the injustice of the Council ; but in vain. The Arian party sent commissioners to Alexandria, who sought to extort evidence against him by drawn swords, whips, clubs, and all engines of cruelty. The Alexandrian clergy desired to be admitted to give evidence, but were refused. To the number of fifteen presbyters and four deacons they remonstrated, but to no purpose. The Maræotic clergy took the same course, but equally without effect. The delegates returned to Tyre with such false evidence as they had been able to extort. While Athanasius, who saw that no justice was to be had there, had already taken flight from the place. The Synod passed sentence upon him, and deposed him from his Bishopric.

Athanasius went to Constantinople to beg of the Emperor justice and a fair trial. Constantine commanded the Bishops who had been at the Synod to appear before him, and give an account of their proceedings. But most of them had gone to their homes ; and Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had neither scruples nor shame, went with a few of his supporters to Constantinople. There he



preferred a fresh charge against Athanasius ; namely, that he had threatened to stop the fleet which brought corn thither from Alexandria. Constantine was credulous enough to be moved by the report ; and Athanasius was banished to Treves in Gaul.

Arius, elated by the success of his party, returned to Alexandria. The heretics, who had been languishing for want of his abilities, now found their hands strengthened. The city was torn with intestine divisions ; and the Emperor in consequence ordered the heresiarch to come to Constantinople, and give an account of his conduct. That Imperial city now became the chief seat of the contention. But Divine Providence had given her a Bishop not unequal to the occasion. This prelate was Alexander, a man eminent for piety and integrity, and of a truly primitive and apostolic spirit. Eusebius of Nicomedia menaced him with deposition and exile, unless he consented to receive Arius back again into the Church.

Alexander, on his part, was conscientiously convinced that a Christian bishop could not rightly consent to the admission of an artful sectarian, who could agree in form to the Nicene Faith, and yet craftily and gradually insinuate his poisonous doctrines. Fully aware of the power of the Arians at this time, and therefore of the critical position in which he was placed, he sought help where alone it could be found. He spent several days and nights alone in his church in

prayer : the faithful followed his example, and prayed without ceasing : thus they humbly and devoutly committed their cause to God.

And the merciful Lord did not fail to give them His aid. In the first place, Constantine himself could not be persuaded to interpose in behalf of Arius, unless he could be convinced of his orthodoxy. He therefore sent for him to the palace, and asked him plainly whether he subscribed to the Nicene decrees. The heresiarch without hesitation subscribed to them : the Emperor required him to swear to them ; and he even did this also. The Emperor now commanded Alexander to receive Arius into the Church the next day. But the wickedness and duplicity of the seducer was not permitted to go further. The good Bishop renewed his supplications with yet more intense fervour, lying prostrate in his church before the altar, attended only by Macarius, a presbyter of Athanasius. He prayed that, if Arius was in the right, he himself might die before the day came ; but, on the other hand, if his own faith was the right faith, Arius, the author of so many evils, might suffer the due punishment of his impiety. The day came ; and it looked at first like one of triumph to the Arians. The heads of the party proudly paraded the streets of the city. Arius walked in the midst of them ; they drew the attention of all the people.

At this moment the visitation of Almighty God overtook them : the leader of the heretics was suddenly consumed, perished, and came to a



fearful end. Even as they went along vain-gloriously in procession, and drew near to the forum of Constantine, Arius was seized with an overpowering terror, and with a fearful disorder of the bowels ; he hurried to a place of privacy, and there fainted ; with an enormous effusion of blood all his bowels gushed out ; and in this miserable and shameful manner he expired.

And now, that the real ungodliness and wickedness of Arianism may be understood and duly appreciated, let the course of action pursued by that party be seriously considered. St. Athanasius in his Encyclical Epistle addressed to all Bishops everywhere, after he had been condemned and deposed by the Synod at Tyre, and Gregory, the Cappadocian, had been put into his place, thus narrates the proceedings of the Arians : " The Church and the Holy Baptistry were set on fire, and straightway groans, shrieks, and lamentations were heard through the city ; while the citizens in their indignation at these enormities, cried shame upon the Governor, and protested against the violence used to them. For the holy and undefiled virgins were stripped naked, and suffered treatment which is not to be named, and if they resisted, they were in danger of their lives. Monks were trampled under foot and perished ; some were hurled headlong ; others were destroyed with swords and clubs ; others were wounded and beaten. And, oh ! what deeds of impiety and iniquity were committed upon the Holy Table ! They offered birds and pine cones in sacrifice, singing the praises of

their idols, and blaspheming even in the very churches of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. They burned the Books of Holy Scripture which they found in the church, and the Jews, the murderers of Our Lord and the godless heathen entering irreverently (O! strange boldness!) the Holy Baptistry, stripped themselves naked, and acted such a disgraceful part, both by word and deed, as one is ashamed even to relate. Certain impious men also, following the examples set them in the bitterest persecutions, seized upon the virgins and widows, and having tied their hands together, dragged them along, and endeavoured to make them blaspheme and deny the Lord; and when they refused to do so, they beat them violently and trampled them under foot. . . . The Arian Gregory, taking pleasure in these calamities, and as if desirous to secure to the heathens and Jews, and those who had wrought these evils upon us, the prize and price of their iniquitous success, gave up the church to be plundered by them." The heretics did not refrain even from attempting to take the life of Athanasius. "They were eager," he says, "to hunt me out and despatch me. And this would have been my fate, had not the grace of Christ assisted me." The thoroughly bad spirit, the bitter hatred and intense malevolence of his adversaries is further evinced by the preposterous slanders with which they tried to blacken the stainless character of that holy man, and, if possible, to work his ruin. No accusation was too



base or too incredible for them to bring against him. They charged him with having been clandestinely consecrated ; with having imposed a duty on Egyptian linen ; with having assisted Philumenus with money, when in rebellion against the Emperor ; with having sanctioned the overthrow of a Communion table, and with breaking one of the Communion vessels ; and having killed a Meletian Bishop, named Arsenius ; with having been the cause of many executions or murders after his return from Gaul ; with having sold for his own benefit the corn bestowed by Constantine on the widows of the Church ; and with having stopped the supplies of corn intended for Constantinople. These charges were repeatedly examined, and proved to be entirely groundless. Nevertheless, they are instructive, as showing but too plainly the implacable hostility of those who made them against the faith of the Gospel, and the foremost defender of it. They warn us against ever being deluded with the fancy, that men can deny the doctrine of the Lord, and yet have true charity and uncorrupt minds.

## Life of St. Athanasius.

THE City of Alexandria, in which St. Athanasius was born, and lived and died, was famous in ancient history. It was built by Alexander the Great in the year 331 B.C. The architect who superintended the construction of it was Dinocrates; the same who rebuilt the celebrated Temple of Diana, at Ephesus. Here, Alexander was brought for burial; his body being enclosed in a coffin of gold, and embalmed in honey. The Ptolemies, his successors, reigned there for 293 years. The Alexandrian School of the Jews, and afterwards of the Christians, was long in the highest esteem. Alexandria received the Gospel by the ministry of St. Mark, who suffered martyrdom there about the year 68 A.D.

The place of his birth and the people amongst whom he grew up and was educated, must have had their effect upon the character of Athanasius. The remarkable philosophy, the intellectual development, the phase of religious thought at Alexandria were not without influence upon his mind.

But little has been recorded or can be inferred concerning his birth and parentage. The names even of his parents are unknown. Probably they lived in or near the city, and there is reason for



supposing that their resources were scanty. It appears most likely that they were pious Christians, and that he was their only child.

The exact date of his birth cannot be determined, but it may be affirmed with reasonable confidence that he was born in one of the last three or four years of the third century.

One anecdote alone concerning his childhood and early youth has come down to us, and that, as we cannot avoid feeling, must be received with some reservation. We give it for what it is worth. It has, in all probability, some foundation in fact, although certain of the particulars appear on the face of them, to say the least, exceedingly questionable.

The story is as follows : Athanasius, when yet a child, was playing with some companions of the same age as himself a kind of sacred game, which consisted in an imitation, on their part, of the sacerdotal functions and of the clerical order. In this play Athanasius was elected to fill the office of bishop, while each of the other children acted either as a presbyter or as a deacon. This species of sacred game they were playing on the day on which the anniversary of the martyrdom of Peter the Bishop, who had suffered in the Diocletian persecution, was being observed. It so happened that Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria, who was about to entertain some of his clergy in a lofty building overlooking the sea beside the harbour, observed the group of children playing on the edge of the shore, and was struck by the serious aspect

of their game. Having afterwards sent for all of them, he enquired what place had been allotted to each of them in the game, supposing that from what had been done, something might be prefigured or portended concerning each of them. From what he heard, he gave orders that the children should be brought up in the Church and educated, and, of all of them, more especially Athanasius.

When he was about nineteen years of age, Athanasius visited in the desert Antony the monk, with whom he stayed some time, and conceived the highest admiration for his character.

We now reach a period in the life of this great man, when he emerges from the obscurity which shrouds his earlier years. Henceforth he stands out in the full light of history, a conspicuous figure in his day and generation. For, at this time, his distinguished attainments and shining character gained for him the notice and esteem of Alexander, who appointed him to be his secretary. He now became a prominent and influential member of one of the most notable communities which then existed in the world. It consisted of the rising and growing Christian Church, of declining paganism and heathen schools of philosophy, and of Jews who were very numerous in Egypt, constituting about one-third of the whole population. And he was in intimate association with the Bishop, who presided over the Church in the City of Alexandria, and was the Primate of all Egypt.

Whilst still very young—that is to say from



twenty to twenty-two years of age, he plainly showed the particular turn of his mind, and gave proof of uncommon proficiency in theological study. For he published two works, in which we may see an earnest of his future life and invaluable labours. The Arian controversy had not yet assumed such proportions as to attract general observation. These treatises, therefore, were of a less distinctive character than that which marked his later writings. They were entitled: the first, "Against the Gentiles;" and the second, "On the Incarnation of the Word." But, from the very circumstance of their early date, they derive an especial interest, as giving proof of the completeness and strength with which the mind of the author had already grasped the main distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, which he afterwards so firmly and faithfully maintained and defended. An outline of his oration against the Gentiles may, in this view, be useful. It consists of two portions: the first part points out the error of the heathens; the second shows the way of truth.

#### PART I.

The pagans deify the skill or fame of deceased ancestors, from whom they are themselves descended, and who must therefore have been of the same mortal nature with themselves. Even great philosophers, such as Plato and Socrates, were guilty of this folly. The ambitions and desire of gain of craftsmen caused statues of men to be

worshipped with Divine honours. The acts of Jupiter, as related by the poets, show him to be not only no god, but worse and weaker even than many weak and wicked men. The immorality of Jupiter is exposed and condemned. The quarrels and contentions of the gods with one another betoken feebleness and impotency. The heathen gods appear more like men, and those not strong or good men, than gods. Their doings often excite ridicule rather than reverence. Idolators do not worship gods, but the skill of the sculptor. For a block of stone they spurn at ; but the same block, carved into some shape, they worship and pray to. It would be more reasonable to worship the artificer than the image which he makes. Ps. cxv. 4, is quoted, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands." The prophet reproves them in like manner, the Holy Ghost speaking thus by him, Is. xlv. 9-20, "They that make a graven image are all of them vanity," &c. Idolators are impious and superstitious. Would to God that the idol-maker would set before the people the unshaped block of wood or stone ! Could they then be deluded into thinking it to be a god ? The heathen poets and historians would have done better if they had forborne to relate so many disgraceful and abominable actions of those whom they call gods. Perhaps they may say that the poets feigned all these things. Well and good, but then why do they worship fictions ? If they say that they worship the realities represented by those fictions, this is no valid excuse. No sensible



man would say that water burns, or that fire freezes. So no poet, or other writer, who really believed Jupiter and the rest to be gods, would ascribe to them actions which show that they are men, and moreover unworthy men. Further, if if they say that these things are fictions, it appears that about men they would be careful to tell the truth ; but that they are not afraid to utter falsehoods about the gods. They act, moreover, inconsistently with reason, for the gods are to be praised ; but if they are to be praised, disgraceful actions, such as would be disgraceful in men, ought not to be attributed to them. The poets were conscious that such base and wicked actions were unbefitting gods ; they did not, therefore, really intend to affirm that those persons were indeed gods, but they celebrated the fame of men who invented useful arts by ascribing to them divine honours. They should rather deify nature, because art is the imitation of nature. If inventors of arts ought to be deified, many besides those reckoned as such should, by parity of reason, be accounted gods. The same reasoning robs Jupiter and Juno, and the other gods, of their claim to deity, and shows them to be no more than human, and, among human beings, not laudable or venerable.

In like manner they deified human lusts and passions in ignoble and degrading representations of beasts and birds, and reptiles, even as the expositor of Divine and true religion (St. Paul) saith, Romans i. 21-23. Their minds being

darkened by sensuality, they sought the likeness of God, who is the Father of Reason, or of the Word, in irrational things. The philosophers would say, that unlearned men were thus instructed to know and converse with the Invisible God ; but the means used, and the ideas presented to the mind, were degrading and abominable.

Does the Deity manifest Himself, or give His answers, on account of the material of the image, or of its shape ? If on account of the material, what is the use of the shape ? If on account of the shape, it would be more becoming and more honourable to the gods to suppose that they would manifest their presence by means of the living creatures themselves, whether men or animals, whose shapes the idol figures represent. It is impious to regard those vile creatures as gods, which in their own nature men abhor. Or, if it be said that the skill of the artificer attracts the deity, the skilful artist himself should, in all reason, attract him much more. Or, secondly, if they say that, not the gods but angels are present with the idols, why do they not address those spiritual powers themselves without the intervention of images ? In this way, too, greater honour is given to the inferior minister than to the Divine power.

If it be said that the Deity shows Himself after the manner of a man why is He represented by the figure of a beast ? Why do they represent the Deity under so many diverse and even ridiculous forms ? But members, as head, hands, feet, which may be dissevered one from another, belong not



to God, for God is a spirit without body or parts. Idolators pray for the supply of their wants to those who want their own care, and shut up in a temple him whom they suppose to rule over all the world.

Of the many gods, which is the right one to worship? Different nations worship different gods, and there are as many gods as nations. Among the Egyptians themselves, some worship what others despise. Some, for instance, worship the crocodile, others abominate it. Thus, having turned away from Christ, the Word of the Father and the Saviour of all, they wander at a loss whither to turn, like men who, having forsaken the light, roam hither and thither helplessly in darkness. Some gods are offered in sacrifice to others : as the ox is sometimes an object of worship, and sometimes a victim for sacrifice. They worship fountains and streams, yet they wash off their filthiness with water, and then throw it away with disgust. The Scythians sacrifice shipwrecked mariners to Diana, thus destroying, in the way of worshipping the gods, those whose lives the providence of the gods has preserved. People of other nations act in a similar way. The immoralities of the heathen gods are imitated, and that too in the way of worshipping the gods by the people (Rom. i. 26, 27). So far from being gods, such beings are lower and more brutish than the brutes themselves, and those who worship them are worthy of pity. If they pondered upon the subject their conscience would teach them better.

The stars and the elements of nature are mighty, but they are made and governed by God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ought to be worshipped, and not they (Ps. xix.). The powers of nature are not sufficient in themselves; but each requires the aid of other powers. The sun is carried round the heavens, as in a chariot; the moon shines not without the light of the sun, and so on. How can things which need the help of other things be gods? For God has need of nothing. Neither can the whole of nature taken together be God, for it consists of parts, and one part has need of the other parts; but God has no parts. A part cannot represent a whole; the sun is not the moon, the moon is not the earth, the eyes are not the feet, the head is not the back; but God has no parts—He is one. But if God be everywhere, He cannot be the things which He holds in his own power. Contraries—heat and cold, things hurtful and things beneficial—cannot be the same God. Consequently, the heathen deities are false. The knowledge of God the Father is by Christ alone.

## PART II.

Another portion of the treatise. We have pointed out the error of the heathens: let us now show the way of truth. It is Christ, the Word of the Father; and the true notion of God is to be found in ourselves. John i. 1-5; Luke xvii. 21. "Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." Faith



is the way by which we know God. Man has a reasonable soul; and by it he understands that God is. Irrational animals are actuated by the senses: the mind of man judges of sensible objects by their relation to things invisible and spiritual. A lyre has strings which give different notes; but the musician arranges the notes in harmony. Man differs from the brutes, in that his mind and reason shows him things which the senses cannot perceive. Otherwise it would be inexplicable, that man should neglect present bodily interests for the sake of those which belong to a future immortal life. Why does the body restrain the appetites which are natural to it, but because it is governed by the soul? The body is governed by the soul, as a horse by his rider. The soul is a different thing from the body: the body is mortal, but the soul immortal; as the doctrine of the Church teaches. When the body is still, in sleep or in death, the soul is active. If the soul, even whilst joined to the body, can live and act apart from it, so, much more, may it survive and act, when separated from the body. And God created it so by His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. As the senses perceive mortal things, so the reasonable soul perceives things immortal. Idolaters are themselves superior to, and more excellent than, the objects of their worship, when they adore images and birds and beasts. They have fallen into this condition, being blinded by their lusts. Let them purify their hearts and lives, and they will see God; in whose image they were

created, as the Holy Scripture saith. Gen. i. 26.

And further, the works of God in creation show Him to be almighty and good, and a lover of mankind. As a statute by Phidias bespeaks its sculptor, even though he be absent ; so creation bespeaks its Author, though He be invisible. Rom. i. 20 ; Acts xiv. 15. Contraries, as heat and cold, summer and winter, are by divine providence made to harmonize, and be beneficial. It is evident that the power of God governs the universe ; otherwise the opposing forces of nature would destroy the world. The solid earth, which is heavier than water, stands out of the water and in the water. (2 Pet. iii. 5.) The elements obey the Lord, as servants obey their master. Otherwise we should behold sedition in nature, and confusion instead of peace. How could man, or any life, exist amidst such elemental war ? Yet we do not see chaos, but perfect order ; and that, because the Lord is the Commander and King of all the world ; in a Commonwealth all sorts and conditions of men live together in peace and concord under the supreme dominion of their Prince. When all the members of the body perform each its own part, we know that it is because the soul governs the whole frame, although the soul itself cannot be seen. So we understand that, not a plurality of gods, but one God, by His Word who is one with Himself, governs the whole world. There is one Maker and Ruler of the world. If there are many gods, there must be many worlds.

If the world wanted many gods to make it, in



that case, God must be deficient in power—a thing which it is impious and monstrous to suppose. If many could have made the world, but one alone made it out of ambition ; this supposition is much more absurd than the former. The peace of the world proves that God is one ; for were there more gods than one there would be disturbance and confusion. A ship would not sail straight, if many pilots steered it ; a lyre would not give harmony, if many hands struck it. One God may make many worlds ; but one world can be made but by one God. The Father of Christ made and governs the world by His own Wisdom, that is, our Lord and Saviour Christ. The forces of nature do not move at random, but are manifestly directed and controlled by one Power, even by the Word and Wisdom of God. All things are made, and upheld, and guided by Him who is the power of God and the Wisdom of God. (1 Cor. i. 24.) God cannot be divided into parts : but the One and Only Begotten Son is one with the Father, as water gushing from a fountain is of one essence with the water of the fountain. Because man had become subject to death, the One and Only Begotten Son of the Father assumed human nature in order to render it immortal. Col. i. 15-18. The omnipotent and holy Word of God gives life to all things, and keeps conflicting elements in peace and safety. St. John i. 1-3. The glory of Deity consists in governing, at one and the same moment, all things, great and small, everywhere, by the mere fiat of His word. As the conductor rules a

great choir, consisting of all sorts of singers, even so doth the Lord "creation's wondrous choir." As the soul governs the members of the body ; as a king or ruler a great city ; so the Word of God creates and rules the universe, even all things more than can be numbered. The Word of God is the Commander and King and Creator of all. Thus the Word saith, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." (John xiv. 9.) Idolatry is forbidden. Ex. xx. 4-6 ; Ps. cxv. 4-8. The Holy Scripture cautions man against being entrapped by the glories and beauties of nature to worship natural objects instead of God. Deut. iv. 19 ; Ex. xx. 3. The prohibition to worship other gods, does not mean that other gods exist ; but that God alone is to be worshipped. Deut. vi. 4, 5 ; xiii. 4 ; Ps. cxix. 90, 91 ; cxlvii. 7, 9. By whose ordinance is all this done ? By that of the Word of God. Ps. xxxiii. 6 ; Ps. xxxiii. 9 ; Gen. i. 26, 6-21. Christ is to be understood. Prov. viii. 27 ; John v. 19. The Son is the Power of the Father. John xiv. 11.

The other treatise to which reference has been made, is entitled, "On the Incarnation of the Word." The title itself shows the importance of this work in relation to the circumstances of the future life of the author. It merits as accurate and complete a description of its contents as it may be practicable to give. There is in truth considerable difficulty in abridging the productions of a writer whose reasoning is so close and exhaustive, and whose style is the reverse of redundant



or diffuse. His arguments are so regularly stated, and comprehensively concluded, that they resemble the pleadings of a legal advocate, or perhaps rather the summing up of a case by a judge. And, in consequence, some have supposed that Athanasius may have been educated for the profession of the law, but the supposition is wholly devoid of support from historical evidence; the little that is known about his early life points in quite a different direction. Moreover, it is impossible not to feel reluctance in leaving out any of the words of books so valuable, as to elicit the remark, "If thou meetest with any tract of Athanasius, and hast no paper at hand on which to transcribe it, rather than fail, write it upon the sleeve of thy coat." (Abbot Cosmas, St. Athanasius, S.P.C.K., p. 39.) The attempt, however, to make an abstract of his tract, "On the Incarnation of the Word," must be ventured upon; and the substance of it shall be given to the reader, according to the best of our ability.

This treatise is a sequel to the former one "Against the Gentiles." 1 Cor. i. 23, is referred to. The things which Jews stumble at, and Gentiles despise, the Word of the Father manifests to be glorious and Divine. In His humility, His Divinity appears. The Reason, or Word, of the Father, in love to us, and in the goodwill of the Father towards us, took a human body in order to save mankind. The creation of the world was not fortuitous or spontaneous, as the Epicureans vainly talk. Some, as Plato, affirm that God made

the world out of pre-existing matter. Thus they join the idea of weakness with that of God; supposing that, like a human workman, He can produce nothing without material to work upon. He cannot properly be called a Creator, who does not himself create the matter out of which things are made. Heretics pretend that there was another Maker of things, besides the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: thus contradicting the teaching of Christ, in Gen. ii. 24, connected with Matt. xix. 4-6; for, in the latter of the two passages Christ declares that God is the Creator. And everything is included in these words of St. John the Evangelist. (John i. 3.) The text, Gen. i. 1, is quoted, and is conjoined with St. Paul's words. Heb. xi. 3. [N.B.—The Epistle to the Hebrews is ascribed to St. Paul—"Which also Paul showeth in these words, 'Through faith we understand that the worlds,' " &c.] It is to be believed, that God made the world out of nothing; and that it came not into being of its own accord; for then we should deny Providence: neither may we think that God made it out of matter previously existing; for then we should impute weakness to God; but that God, where nothing was, created all things by His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. God created man, not like other creatures, but in His own image and likeness, and endowed him with reason and free-will. And he gave him a law for his probation. Gen. ii. 16-17. To die means, in this place, not only to die, but to abide in the corruption of death.



The reader will wonder, why, having declared my intention of writing concerning the Incarnation of the Word, I have commenced by discoursing about the beginning of mankind. But I will proceed now to treat of the Incarnation of the Word; and, as I do so, the reason of my having first spoken about the creation and fall of man will quickly become apparent. The sin of man entailed the Incarnation of the Word of God, in order to deliver man from condemnation. Mankind are restored by grace, and by the presence of the word of God. By nature corruptible, men are made by grace incorruptible. But if they will not turn to God, they become subject to corruption. Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7. Death came into the world through envy of the devil. Mankind needed regeneration for they had become universally and abominably corrupt; as the Apostle, that witness for Christ, said. Rom. i. 26, 27. As sin prevailed more and more amongst men, so against men did death and corruption more and more prevail. For the word of God, which threatened men, if they sinned, with the punishment of death, must be true. Yet that the devil should destroy the work of God, so that it would have been better that God had never created it, would have been dishonourable to God, and would have argued weakness in the Almighty Creator. Could Adam by repentance make satisfaction for his sin? No; because repentance causes discontinuance of sinning, but it does not take away sin that has been committed. Christ

alone was able to blot out the sin of Adam. The Reason (or, if you like better to call Him so, the Word) of the Father came down to our world ; not, indeed, that He was ever far from it, being with the Father present everywhere, and upholding all things with the word of His power ; but He came down, in that He took man's nature upon Him, in order that the work of the Father in making man might not be rendered frustrate. Yet He did not simply assume human nature ; but He took it in the womb of a pure virgin, of her substance. That Body He offered up as a sacrifice to the Father, in order to deliver men from death, and to give them the grace of the resurrection to eternal life.

When the Son of God perceived that, unless He Himself should die, man could not be redeemed ; not being able to die He assumed a human body, with the purpose that He might die in it for man's sake. And He tasted death for every man. All mankind must have perished, unless the Lord and Saviour of all, the Son of God, had suffered death. Christ abolished death by the sacrifice of His own body. All that we are saying about the Saviour you may see ratified by the ministers of the Saviour, men skilled in Divine things, if you should read what they have written as in 2 Cor. v. 14, 15 ; Heb. ii. 9. And then, why the Word of God must become man, is shown in these words, " For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their



salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. ii. 10. These words mean that none could recover men from corruption but the Word of God who created them in the beginning. Therefore He took a body, that He might offer Himself a sacrifice for them. Heb. ii. 14, 15.

As from men death gathered his strength against men, so the Word of God, by taking man's nature, destroyed death, and gained for men the resurrection unto life: as the Apostle saith. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

In what respect would man differ from the brutes if he did not know the Word of the Father, by the which Word he was created? But men fell away from God to worship idols which are nothing in the world. Thus they preferred vanities to God, and the creature to the Creator. Being led away by wicked lusts, they even worshipped devils, and sacrificed men and beasts to them. And they practised magical arts and astrology. They knew not the only God and His Reason (*i.e.*, His Word); although God had plainly, and in many ways, manifested Himself to them. The likeness of God, in which man was created, was enough to make men know the Word of God, and through Him the Father. Yet God, foreseeing human infirmity, provided that men might know Him by His works. And further, when they heeded not His works, He gave them the law and the prophets so that they might learn about Him from their fellow-men.

Deut. xxx. 11-14, is evidently alluded to here, "If it is irksome to them to look up to heaven, let them

learn from their neighbours.") They might have known from the order of nature that the Reason of the Father, by whom the Father is revealed, is the Prince and Ruler of all things. The discourses of the saints might have taught them the same thing. And the Law might have turned them from wickedness to live a virtuous life. For the Law was not intended for the Jews only; but to instruct all mankind. To what purpose had God created man in his own image, if he should be degraded to a level with the beasts that perish? What glory would redound to God, if, after He had made mankind, they should worship others and not Him that made them? A king would not build a fortress, and then suffer it to be surrendered to the enemy. Rather he would come himself and hold a conference in his own person with the garrison. What was it fitting that God should do? No man could save his fellow-men, for all had fallen from the Divine likeness in which they were made. No angel could save them; because the angels were not made, as men were, in the image and likeness of God. By none could salvation be wrought, but by the express image of the Person of God, our Saviour Christ. Recovery cannot be effected unless death and corruption be abolished. So Christ took a mortal body in order that He might destroy death. As a portrait that has been obliterated cannot be restored, unless the original of it present himself again, so the good Son of the Father, the image and likeness (character) of the Father, came into this world to restore the race of men to the Divine likeness.



Luke xix. 10 ; John iii. 3, are spoken of spiritual birth.

Who could teach the world the knowledge of God which it had lost ? How couldest thou teach him whom thou seest not ? But the Word of God, who seeth the mind and the soul, giveth the knowledge of the Father. Because the eyes of men looked downward to the earth, the Son of God took a human body, that men might know, first, the Word of God in the body, and then, from the Word, the Father. God, the Lover of mankind, the one Saviour of all men, the Word and Reason of God, took to Himself a human body, in which He should converse with men. (See Titus iii. 4.) Comparing Christ with the objects of their false worship, they would perceive that He alone is the Lord ; and that Christ is Very God, inasmuch as, by His resurrection, He has showed Himself to be the Conqueror of death. "I am come," He said, "to seek and to save that which was lost" Luke xix. 10 ; also Eph. iii. 17-19 ; above, by the nature of things ; downwards, by the Incarnation ; in the depth, by the dead ; in the breadth, all over the world. In two ways by His Incarnation, our Saviour manifested His love towards men : He removed death from us, and renewed us ; and, previously unseen, He made Himself to be seen through His works, and showed Himself to be the Reason and Word of the Father, and the Commander and King of all things. Yet whilst He dwelt here in the body, He was not absent anywhere, from any place or thing. But

He was present everywhere, quickening and embracing and comprehending all things. Wonderful it is, how at one and the same time, He lived as Man ; and, as the Word and Reason of the Father He quickened all things, and was present with the Father as His Son.

By His contact with material things He contracted no defilement, but purified that which He touched. As the sun is not darkened by touching darkness, but dispels it ; and is not polluted by touching impurity, but makes it pure ; much more, He "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." 1 Pet. ii. 22. When the Holy Scriptures say, that He ate, drank, was born, suffered, they mean that the Body which did those things was the Lord's. Thus it is understood, that the Word was made flesh ; but the works which He did in the flesh showed Him to be the Son of God. John x. 38.

His miracles prove Him to be God : for He that can cure the diseases to which men are liable from their birth ; and give them, as in the case of the man born blind, that which they had never had before, shows that He is the Builder and Creator of the human frame. Taking a body of the pure Virgin, He showed Himself to be the Creator and Maker of all bodies ; by turning water into wine, He made it manifest that He was the Creator of all water ; by walking on the sea, He gave a proof of His dominion over all things. So, by His several acts of Divine power, it is placed beyond doubt that He is the Son, or



Wisdom, or Power of God. By the wonders, and the convulsions of nature, attending His crucifixion and death, it was demonstrated that Christ is God and the Son of God.

It appertained to no one else to teach concerning the Father, and to purge away idolatry, than to the Reason and Word, who governs all things in the world, and is alone the true and only-begotten Son of His Father. All mankind were debtors to the Divine justice; the debt which they owed, was that all should die. Christ paid that debt by offering Himself a sacrifice for all, and by His rising again, He declared Himself to be the Conqueror of death, and became the first fruits of the resurrection. (1 Cor. xv. 23.) In His body He was partaker of the nature of all men: for He was human, and because He was human He was subject to death. Yet, being miraculously produced of a pure virgin, although mortal, He saw no corruption, by reason of the Word of God which was united with His humanity in one Person. The Word, who could not die, inasmuch as He is immortal, took a body, that in it He might die. In that body He offered Himself a sacrifice for all [Heb. ii. 14, 15, is here, not quoted, but incorporated in the text, so likewise, Rom. viii. 1; Heb. xi. 35; 1 Cor. xv. 36-38.] 1 Cor. xv. 53-55 is cited. But why did not the Lord die a natural death instead of the shameful death of crucifixion? In the first place, because death by natural decay, or by disease, implies weakness; but He was Life, and the Word of God, and mighty in power. If

He had died of disease, weakness might have been imputed to the Lord's body. But why did He not avoid the machinations of the Jews? Because it was necessary that He should die. But the Lord died in such a manner, as to make it evident that His death was voluntary, and that He offered Himself a willing sacrifice. If He had himself been subject to sickness, no one would have believed that He could drive away sickness; if He had concealed His body and then come forth and said that He was risen from the dead, no one would have given credence to His testimony; because proof of His death was needed, before proof of His resurrection could be given. It was requisite, therefore, that His death should be open and manifest, and should take place in the public view. Why did not Christ choose a more honourable death? Because by suffering death in its worst form, He showed Himself to be the conqueror of every kind of death.

Thus the Cross on which He died, became the trophy of death vanquished. Moreover, He was not beheaded, like John the Baptist, nor sawn asunder, like Isaiah, but died with His body un-mutilated and entire, that He might exhibit the unity of His Church.

Why did He die an accursed death? That He might become a curse for us. Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13. He broke down the middle wall or partition between Jews and Gentiles. Eph. ii. 14. Again, His two hands being stretched out upon the Cross, with one hand He drew the Gentiles to



Him, with the other, the Jews: as He said. John xii. 32. Suspended in the air on the Cross, He cast down the prince of the power of the air. Eph. ii. 2. He cast out the devil, and purified the air, and made a way for us to heaven. Heb. x. 20; Luke x. 18. Thus opening a new way into heaven. Ps. xxiv. 7, 9. There needed no opening of any gates to the Lord of all things, neither could there be any door shut against the Creator; but for us all this was done. He rose not from the dead sooner than the third day, in order to make it appear plainly that He had really and truly died. Also to show His incorruptibility. But if He had tarried longer in the grave, some might have said it was not the same body which died and was buried that rose, but another. Death is abolished by the Cross of Christ.

Death was terrible before the coming of Christ; but now it is not to be feared. Even children now readily encounter death. As the Apostle Paul saith. 1 Cor. xv. 54-56. The tyrant is seen to be bound in chains. Believers are exhorted to suffer martyrdom for Christ's sake. As the sun drives away darkness, and lights up the face of the earth, so our Saviour, by His Cross, bound death in chains, and daily enabled His disciples to triumph over it. When you see men and women and children, for Christ's sake, willingly and gladly embracing death, which naturally all men dread, it is plain that the Lord has conquered death. Who that sees a spiteful and venomous serpent trodden under foot, does not understand

that it has been killed, unless he is out of his mind, and has lost his senses? And when children make sport of a lion, we know that he is dead, or nearly so; so when believers in Christ condemn death, we are sure that Christ has subdued death. Christ rose again and vanquished death. If Christ be not risen, how is it that men, through faith in His resurrection, forsake their sins? Wherever Christ is preached and believed, idolatry is cast down, and the devils are driven away. This is the work, not of one who is dead; but of one who is living, and who is God. If the devils, and the gods whom the heathens worship, are put to flight by Christ—and yet they say He is dead—how inactive and powerless must the objects their worship be! For, if it be true that the dead do nothing, and yet our Saviour does daily such mighty and excellent works, it is manifest that He is alive. As it could not be but He must die, since for the very purpose of overcoming death by dying He took a mortal body; so, on the other hand, He could not be holden of death, because He is the sanctuary of life. Christ, now that He is risen, cannot, it is true, be seen: for it is the nature and property of God to be invisible to mortal eyes, but His works proclaim that He is risen. If Christ were not risen He could not drive away devils, or despoil idols; for the devils would not obey one who is dead. The devils perceived Him to be God, and said so. Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34. Luke viii. 28. Do not thou deny Him; but confess that our Saviour



raised His body from the dead, and that He is the Son of the true God, the very Reason, and Wisdom, and Power of His Father, and the First Fruits of the Resurrection. The unbelief of the Jews and Gentiles is rebuked. First, the unbelief of the Jews is rebuked. The Jews, in the Bible written by the inspiration of God, read in many places words which ought to induce them to believe in Christ. Is. vii. 14, 15; ix. 6; Num. xxiv. 17, 5-7; Is. xix. 1; Hos. xi. 1; Is. iv. 3; Deut. xxviii. 66, "Thy *Life* shall *hang* in doubt before thee," applied to Christ hanging on the Cross. Also, Jer. xi. 19, and Is. xi. 1-10; but as quoted by St. Paul. Rom. xv. 12. Christ alone of all mankind was born of a virgin; His birth alone was announced to the world by the appearance of a star; Christ alone reigneth before he can speak; Is. viii. 4, being applied to Christ triumphing over the enemies of His Church. Christ is the only king of the Jews to whom the Gentiles sought. Is. xi. 10. To all the other kings of the Jews the Gentiles were enemies. None of the patriarchs or prophets, but Christ only, suffered death upon the Cross for the salvation of all man. Many suffered for their faithful preaching of the Word of God: but none died for the salvation of the people. Moreover, He who thus died was not only man, but the life of men. Deut. xxviii. 66. Again; whose nativity, but that of Christ, was ineffable? Is. liii. 8. No one was prophesied of, or fulfilled all the predictions of the prophets but the one Saviour of us all, the Word of God, our

Lord Jesus Christ. Before Him all idolatry everywhere shall be abolished, Is. lxxv. 1, 2 ; to whom do these words belong, but to Christ ? "I have spread out my hands," is applied to Christ on the Cross. Is. xxxv. 3-6 prophecy thus foretold that God shall come : and that when He came these signs would show that He was come. Some prophets did one or two of the miracles here specified ; but no single prophet did them all. But when the Word of God came in the body, He was seen to do all of them, Matt. ix. 33. If any one should say that he is yet waiting to see whether Christ shall come, the seventy weeks of Daniel confute him, Dan. ix. 24-26. Christ, the Anointed, the Most Holy, came at the time there foretold. Jerusalem should stand until His Advent ; afterwards Vision and Prophecy should fail in Israel. It is a strong proof of the Advent of Christ having taken place, that Vision and Prophecy have ceased, and Jerusalem is no more. Gen. xlix. 10 ; Matt. xi. 13. And now the Jews have neither kings nor prophets. Yet they reject Christ. Ps. cxviii. 27 ; Ps. cvii. 20. Then follows a citation which is apparently a paraphrase of Deut. xxxiii. 29. The Jews are like a man who sees the earth lighted by the sun yet fails to see the sun which gives it light.

Now, in the second place, the unbelief of the Gentiles is rebuked. Our doctrine of the Word, or Reason, of God made flesh, they ridicule ignorantly. The Gentiles say, and say truly, that the world is a great body, and that God dwells in it. But, if it be so, there is nothing absurd in



saying that God resides in a human body, which is a part of the whole world. If it be absurd to deny that the soul which animates the whole body, animates every single part of the body ; so it is absurd to deny that the Reason, or Word, of God, who made and fills all the world, is present in some particular portion of the world, Acts xvii. 28 ; and a man is a part of the world. So there is nothing absurd in saying that a human body might be used for declaring the truth and knowledge of the Father. Why did not God exhibit Himself in some grander form, as in the sun or moon or stars ? Because His purpose was not to make a display, but to heal and to teach those who were in misery. All the rest of the creation acknowledges its Creator, and observes His laws. The sun, the moon, the heavens, the stars, water, air, obey His decrees. Man alone has turned aside from the truth to worship idols and vanities. Since then men failed to learn about God from the whole universe, the Reason and Word of God took to Himself a part of the universe, *i.e.*—His body, in order that, by means of this men might see and know the Father. He did not by His Incarnation detract anything from His own power and holiness ; but rather, by taking a body, He Himself sanctifieth His body. Plato is held in high estimation among the Gentiles. If he said that the Maker of the world placed Himself at the helm of it, to order it ; why should you deem it to be incredible that the Reason of God should become incarnate, in order to teach and to save

mankind who had gone astray. When all things else had been made, man was made in the image of God; and the Reason of God took flesh, that He might restore fallen man. The pollution of man was in the body; so the Word was made flesh, that He might expel the pollution, and imbue the body with life. Our Saviour put on a mortal body, that He might abolish the mortality which He found there. If by His command only He had driven death out of the body, it would have remained still, in its own nature, corruptible, Is. xi. 9. Christ manifested His power in every part of the universe—in heaven, hell, in men, in devils, in earth, in the sea, Col. ii. 15. The Divinity of Christ may be everywhere beheld. When was idolatry, and all its concomitant superstitions overthrown, except when the true Word of God appeared amongst men? In place of many religions there is now one, that is the Christian. The sign of the Cross now conquers all infernal powers. The subject of the unity and universality of the Christian Religion is pursued. The simple doctrine of Christ teaches the truths which human philosophy, with great pomp of words, vainly attempted to teach. The name of Christ prevails over every adverse influence. The power of Christ is superior to that of the devils, and is not derived from the devil. (Matt. xii. 24-30.) But if the fabled gods of the poets, and the tricks of devils, and the wisdom of the Greeks, are thrown into the shade by Christ; and if His



works appear plainly to be greater than any mere man can do ; then it must be confessed that He is the true Son of God, the Reason, Wisdom, and Power of the Father. Æsculapius, Hercules, Bacchus were worshipped ; but their performances were as nothing compared with the miracles wrought by the Lord. Was there ever any man whose death was attended by such wonders and signs as attended the death of Christ ? Who, besides Christ, ever caused his religion to spread over the whole world ? If Christ be not the Word of God, why do not the gods of the nations stop His Religion from being propagated in their territories ? What heathen monarch, or wise man, ever brought over multitudes from other religions to his own, by the bare preaching of his doctrine ; as Christ has, by the bare preaching of His Gospel, emptied the temples and filled the churches ? Who hath so changed the minds and manners of men, as Christ hath done ? And no such assurance of immortality was ever given, as is afforded by the Cross of Christ and by His resurrection. It never entered into the thoughts of the heathen, that the body could rise again from death. And none but our Saviour and the King of all, Christ, taught and enabled even children to keep the law of perfect continence and purity. Our Lord Jesus Christ alone so taught, and, what is more, so influenced the minds of men, that everywhere they mended their manners, and acknowledged Him, and, through Him, worshipped His Father. Formerly wars prevailed

everywhere ; but the Gospel of Christ inculcated peace. The beloved Son of God is the Author of peace, Is. ii. 4. Where the doctrine of Christ is heard, men turn from war to husbandry ; instead of handling the sword, they spread forth their hands in prayer ; instead of fighting one with another, they are armed against devils with modesty and virtue of soul. Christians, even in their tender years, are peaceable ; suffer patiently injury and fraud ; and disregard death, and fearlessly face martyrdom. The power of Christ is superior to the strength of all men. Reference is made to Acts xix. 19. If the works of Christ prove Him to be Divine, the refusal to acknowledge Him to be our Lord and Creator is impious. (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

The Word or Reason of God was incarnate, that we might have the knowledge of the invisible God. The virtues and good offices of our Saviour, through His Incarnation, are so many and so great that the attempt to recount them would be like trying to number the waves of the sea. Wheresoever the doctrine of the Saviour flourishes, idolatry and whatsoever is opposed to the faith, diminishes and withers and sinks down. For as when the sun shines, darkness hath no power, but light goes abroad everywhere ; even so, by the coming of the Word of God the darkness of idolatry is dispersed, and all the world is enlightened by His doctrine. When all human systems of religion are seen to pass away and perish, and the Religion of Christ alone remains,



it is a plain proof that He is God, and the true Son of God, and the only begotten Word. O! pious man and lover of Christianity, we have set forth these few things in a plain and simple manner. But study the Holy Scripture for yourself, for it was written by holy men inspired by God. His second glorious Advent is to be looked for. Matt. xxvi. 64, xvi. 27. Watch therefore. Matt. xxiv. 44; 2 Cor. v. 10. But for searching the Scriptures, and for the true understanding of them, there is need for a life of integrity, a mind of purity, and of the practice of Christian virtue. No one without a pure mind, and without following the life of the saints, can comprehend the words of the saints. "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. ii. 9.) Them that live virtuously, and love God and the Father of Christ Jesus our Lord; by whom, and with whom, to the Father himself, together with the Son, in the Holy Ghost, be honour, power, and glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

It seemed desirable to give as complete an epitome as might be practicable of these two treatises, the one "Against the Gentiles," and the other, "On the Incarnation of the Word of God," because they put us in possession of the views held by St. Athanasius of the fundamental principles of the Christian Religion. From the principles here laid down, he never deviated in the slightest

degree : in the uncompromising assertion of them he never wavered. Of the Faith thus confessed in the days of his youth, he was henceforward to the end of his long life the unflinching and dauntless defender. The music of the Gospel, the voice of the Good Shepherd, spoke too plainly to his inmost soul, for his trumpet ever to give an uncertain sound. His spiritual ear was able to discriminate between false notes and true : flattering words could not deceive him ; the dust of controversy could not blind his eyes : the fear of results could not shake his constancy. In the conduct of Athanasius, on the one side, and the behaviour of his adversaries, on the other, we behold an edifying illustration of the truth divinely taught, that good works can come only from right faith ; that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit ; and that the tree is to be known by its fruit. The saint stood firm as a rock, and unmoveable, confident in the righteousness of his cause, yet tolerant and charitable ; whereas those opposed to him were unscrupulous in the use of calumny, perjury, treachery, false misrepresentation, shameless co-operation with unbelieving Jews and persecuting pagans, in their malicious endeavours to ruin the reputation and destroy the life of this good man.

The hour for the commencement of his life-long struggle with the powers of the darkness of this world, and with every form of spiritual wickedness in high places, had not yet struck, but it was drawing near. A theologian, who, though young,



was so highly distinguished, and of such conspicuous promise, could not be overlooked. And about this time he was admitted by Alexander into the ranks of the sacred ministry and ordained deacon. He appears to have been placed at the head of the order of deacons in Alexandria ; in other words, to have been constituted Archdeacon ; although that title in our own Church denotes an office of a different description.

In the course of a few years the Arian controversy was raging in every part of the world. The disturbances occasioned by it were so violent and widespread that Constantine the Great resolved to summon the famous Council of Nicœa, in the hope of restoring peace to the Church and to the Empire. To that Council came Alexander, the Archbishop of Alexandria, accompanied by his deacon, Athanasius. A great many of the Fathers of the Council had been sufferers in the recent persecutions, and " bore in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus." (Gal. vi. 17.) Such was the case with the venerable Hosius, Bishop of Corduba, or Cordava, in Spain ; the most eminent in ecclesiastical rank was the Archbishop of Alexandria, and he alone, of all the Bishops present, had the title of "papa" or "pope." There was likewise Paul of Neo-Cosarea, whose paralyzed hands bore witness to the sufferings he had undergone ; James of Nisibis, who had lived the life of a wild beast, on mountains and in caverns ; Pophnutius, the Coptic hermit, whose face showed an empty socket out of which his eye had been forced. All

these were there, and numbers more like them. The decrees of the Council were enacted by those men of long experience and tried fidelity, by Bishops and Priests, whose age, learning, and ability qualified them for a work of such heavy responsibility. But moving about amongst them, imparting life and spirit, and consistency to the debates, quick to detect the subtilties of the Arians, courageous and unyielding in the maintenance of Christian truth, with an intellect too keen to be deluded, and a heart too true to be persuaded by any inducement to give place to that which he knew to be wrong, little of stature, but of a light, active frame, and capable of great endurance, and with "a face like the face of an angel," was the deacon Athanasius, then about thirty years of age.

The Nicene Council being over, Alexander, together with Athanasius, returned home to Alexandria. About five months afterwards the pious, gentle, and wise prelate, Alexander, died. The general voice of the Church, as well as the wish strongly expressed by Alexander himself before his death, pointed out Athanasius as the fittest person to succeed him. When the time of the Archbishop's death drew near, and the clergy were standing round his bed, he called for Athanasius ; and when his call was answered by another of the clergy who had the same name, the dying man took no notice of the reply, but called again for Athanasius, saying, as he did so, "You fancy that you will escape, but it cannot be."



For when the illness of Alexander grew extreme, Athanasius had fled out of the city, fearing lest he should be nominated to fill the office as soon as it became vacant. Athanasius was, it is true, young for undertaking so weighty a charge ; but, though young in years, he had no superior, even if he had any equal, in integrity and ability. The Arians tried all they could to invalidate the election and consecration of Athanasius ; and they disseminated several false reports about the manner of it. But their efforts in this respect were as futile as their accusations were false. In an encyclical letter from the Egyptian Bishops, they formally testified that a majority of them had publicly, in the presence of the laity of Alexandria, and with their openly-expressed assent and approval, appointed Athanasius to the Bishopric. The date of his consecration was probably June 8th, in the year 326 A.D.

He held the See for forty-six years, and during the whole of that long period he scarcely enjoyed any relief from incessant annoyance and persecution. The course of his life from this moment to his dying day cannot be more truly or graphically described than in the eloquent words of Richard Hooker : "This," he says, "was the plain condition of those times, the whole world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against it : half a hundred years spent in doubtful trial which of the two in the end would prevail, the side which had all, or else the part which had no friends but God and death ; the one the defender of his innocency. the other a finisher of all his troubles."

There was, however, a brief interval of calm before the storm broke. And in this time of peace an incident occurred, which it is pleasing to record. It is like a gleam of light upon the troubled waters. A philosopher of the city of Tyre, by name Meropius, being of an adventurous spirit, resolved upon extensive travel. The date of his undertaking was near the commencement of the Fourth Century. He took with him, as his companions, two well-instructed Christian youths, Frumentius and Ædesius. The vessel in which they sailed, being in need of food and water, approached some port in the Red Sea. The barbarous people had recently thrown off allegiance to the imperial power : and when the ship came to their shore, they fell upon the strangers, and put to death all the passengers and crew—Meropius amongst them ; the only persons saved alive being the two boys whom he had brought with him. These were found reading and praying under the shade of a tree ; and were carried away to the city of Axum or Auxume, where they were handed over to the king. They gained his favour, and were valued by him for their accomplishments. He appointed Ædesius to be his cup-bearer, and Frumentius to be his secretary or treasurer. In process of time they became tutors to his two sons Atbreha and Atzbeha. When the king died, the widowed queen besought them to remain with her until her sons grew up, and to assist her in the government of the kingdom. They consented ; and at once exerted their influence in diffusing the



knowledge of the Gospel, and in securing privileges for Christian merchants who might come to trade in the country. In due course the youthful king assumed the functions of sovereignty : but both he and his mother urged the two brothers to stay with them. They could not, however, be persuaded to do so ; but sought and obtained permission to return back again to the Roman Empire. Ædesius hurried forward to his home ; he remained there, and was ordained a presbyter of Tyre. Frumentius, on the other hand, could not satisfy his conscience without proceeding to Alexandria and laying a report of the spiritual condition of Ethiopia before the Alexandrian Church and Bishop. He begged Athanasius that a Bishop might be sent to carry on the work which he had been permitted to begin. As Athanasius sat in the assembly convened for the purpose, and listened with deep interest to the narrative, he exclaimed, "What other man shall we find such as thou art, in whom is the Spirit of God as He is in thee, who will be able to discharge these duties" ? Then, with the consent of the other prelates who were present, Frumentius was consecrated the first Bishop of Ethiopia. That country is now called Abyssinia ; and for many ages his memory was cherished, and his name honoured there. He received the title of Abba Salama, or Father of Peace ; and is known by this name in the annals. The Metropolitan of Auxume still bears this name, and derives his orders from the Patriarch of the Coptic, *i.e.*, the Egyptian Church. A Christian

Church exists in Abyssinia to this day, though much depressed, and very ignorant. The inaccessible situation of the country has no doubt been a principal cause of this decline. Yet the same cause contributed, at the beginning, to preserve the Church from error. For Constantius laboured to poison it with Arianism, and gave orders that Frumentius should be deposed, and an Arian appointed to supplant him, but the country was happily beyond the reach of his imperial bigotry.

From the time when St. Athanasius was consecrated Bishop of Alexandria until the day of his death, he was subjected to a long series of persecutions at the hands of the Arian party. Although they were defeated over and over again, they renewed their attacks with persistent malevolence. Too often their powerful influence and wicked arts enabled them to gain temporary success ; and on those occasions the saint was driven from Alexandria into exile. The most intelligible manner of tracing the course of his life really seems to be to give an account of his several terms of banishment from his See, together with the manner of his expulsion and of his return. Five times he was forced to leave his home and work, before he was finally restored to it, and permitted to spend his few remaining days in peace.



## FIRST EXILE.

HIS first exile was to Trèves. He was sent thither by the Emperor Constantine. But whether the Emperor veritably intended it as a punishment, or whether, considering the life of Athanasius to be in extreme jeopardy, he simulated anger, and ordered him away to a place where he would be safe from the machinations of his foes, may be regarded as an open question. Certain it is, that the Bishop was well received there, and was treated with undisguised favour by the Emperor's son, who constantly befriended him during the two years, more or less, of his enforced residence in that city.

The Arians had prevailed upon Constantine to convene a Council at Tyre for the purpose of investigating sundry grave charges which they preferred against Athanasius. They hoped to weaken his authority by accusing him of serious misconduct. Everyone of their accusations was, it scarcely need be said, convincingly and absolutely disproved. It would be tedious to recount particularly all the wicked actions of which they alleged him to be guilty. One instance may suffice as a specimen of their fiendish malignity, and of his perfect innocence. At this Council Eusebius of Cæsarea, a declared opponent of St. Athanasius, presided. It assembled in the year 335 A.D. The animosity of Eusebius was known to the Emperor, and may probably have formed in his mind an honourable motive for determining that the

Council should be held at Tyre ; because he was aware that Paul, the Bishop of Tyre, was favourably inclined towards the other side. Thither Athanasius, after considerable hesitation and with much reluctance, felt himself constrained to repair. He was supported by forty-nine Egyptian Bishops who went there along with him. But the Eusebian party, in number and in influence, was more powerful. The Eusebian Bishops amounted, in number, to sixty, and their hands were strengthened by the favour of the Court. All the offences with which they dared to slander Athanasius, were in themselves and upon the face of them incredible, when charged against the character of such a man. It will be sufficient, as has been said, to specify one of their accusations as a sample of the rest. We will take the story of Arsenius. This man was a Meletian Bishop, whom they affirmed that Athanasius had murdered. In proof of it they produced a box, out of which they took a dead man's hand dried and salted. They said that it was the hand of Arsenius ; and that Athanasius had killed him, and had preserved his hand for magical purposes. Meanwhile, the friends of Athanasius had discovered Arsenius hiding in a house in Tyre, and they kept him secretly in readiness to be produced when the inquiry concerning him came on. The Arians looked forward to the day with eager expectation. They anticipated a triumph. They boasted that they could produce ocular demonstration of the guilt of Athanasius. The trial of the case began, and they exhibited the



dead hand to the Court. Their party shouted in exultation. Athanasius stood quiet and unmoved. He asked whether any of the judges were able to identify Arsenius if they saw him. Several said that they could do so. Then a man wrapped in a cloak was brought in. When they looked upon him they were forced to acknowledge that it was he. Athanasius then lifted the man's cloak on one side, and showed his hand and arm ; he raised the cloak on the other side, and there was the other hand and arm safe and sound. The accusers could say no more. But the villainy of the whole transaction is indescribable. Arsenius, for his own part, confessed and renounced his schism, and promised obedience in future to Athanasius, and he kept his promise.

Notwithstanding that the accusation last mentioned was thus proved to be absolutely groundless, they did not desist from making against him other charges which were no less preposterous. And they dispatched to Egypt six commissioners to collect all the evidence they could, which might be prejudicial to the interests of the Bishop. The commissioners signally failed in their undertaking. Nevertheless, the Council proceeded to deprive him of his Bishopric. Athanasius, however, did not wait for their decision : for, perceiving that no justice was to be expected at their hands, he, with some of his companions, had already fled. He suddenly left Tyre, with five of his suffragans, and took ship for Constantinople, there to seek the face of the

Emperor, and appeal to him for justice. He watched an opportunity of presenting himself before the Emperor. Constantine was riding in his chariot on his way from the palace to the city. Athanasius took his stand in the middle of the road. The Emperor did not at first recognize him : but when he became aware who it was, he tried to pass him by in silence. Athanasius, however, did not stir out of the way, and thus addressed him : "Let my accusers," said he, "state their charges in thy presence. Be thou the judge between us." His request was granted : and his adversaries were commanded to come and appear before the Emperor at Constantinople. Few of them, however, obeyed the summons : the greater part of them returned to their homes. But the two Eusebií, Patrophilvs, Theognius, Valeus, and Ursacius, went boldly on in obedience to the mandate.

The resources of Eusebius of Nicomedia were not yet exhausted ; and with unutterable baseness and unconscionable cunning, he induced his party to waive their former accusations, and to invent a fresh one, which he deemed more likely to excite the Emperor's displeasure. The Arians now accused Athanasius of threatening to hinder the sailing of the corn-ships which carried grain from Egypt to Constantinople. The result showed that they had not miscalculated the effect of such an insinuation upon the Emperor's mind. Athanasius replied, by asking how could a private citizen, and one who was far from wealthy, do anything of the



sort? Eusebius declared, and scrupled not to confirm his words with an oath, that the Archbishop of Alexandria was a man of vast wealth and power, and quite able to stop the sailing of the ships. The Emperor uttered a fierce exclamation of impatience and anger—whether genuine or feigned, it is impossible to say with certainty—and banished Athanasius to Trèves in Gaul.

Athanasius reached Trèves early in the year 336 A.D. Constantine, afterwards Constantine II., the eldest son of the great Emperor, was residing there, and conducting, as Cæsar, the affairs of the Roman Government. He was well disposed towards the illustrious exile and his cause. Inter-course with Maximinus, the orthodox Bishop of Trèves would afford him congenial society. He had also around him some faithful companions from Egypt, in whose sympathy he must have found no little consolation. And he was allowed to carry on an extensive correspondence with his friends. Harassed and persecuted as he had been, the time which he spent at Trèves, notwithstanding the sad sense of banishment and deprivation, must have seemed a season of peaceful security and quiet rest. He wrote, at this time, several important letters. One was to the presbyters of Alexandria, urging them to take to heart, and to make their own, the words of the Apostle St. Paul, "Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ." Later, again, at the beginning of the year 338 A.D., he addressed to the Church one of those epistles

styled "Festal Letters," that is to say, letters written with reference to the great festivals of the Christian Church. He assures his fellow-Christians that, though "absent in the flesh" he would yet be "present with them in the spirit," and would keep the Easter Feast in heart with them. And he reminded them that the road to consolation often led through tribulation. After the banishment of Athanasius, and towards the end of the year 336 A.D., occurred the death of the notorious heresiarch Arius in the horrible manner which has been before described. Constantine the Great did not outlive him many months, for he expired at noon on the Day of Pentecost, in the year 337; having first received the Sacrament of Baptism, which he had put off until the last.

He had divided his immense empire among his three sons. To the eldest son, Constantine II., with whom was joined another son, Constans, he assigned the Western world. The Eastern provinces were given to Constantius II. The latter conformed to the fashionable heresy. But of the character of Constantine the little that is known is laudable. His life was of brief duration, for in the quarrels which quickly ensued he was slain by the troops of his brother Constans.

At first, however, he appears to have acquired some degree of ascendancy over the other two emperors. And one of the uses which he made of the authority thus accorded to him, was to effect the restoration of Athanasius. He wrote from Trèves to his brothers, stating his deter-



mination to send him back. Accordingly, he took the Bishop with him to Viminacium in Moesia, where the three emperors met and agreed upon this point. Athanasius returned to Alexandria in November, 338 A.D. He was received by the Church with hearty congratulation and rejoicing; thanksgivings for his safe return were offered up in the churches.

### SECOND EXILE.

ST. ATHANASIUS was once again reinstated at Alexandria; but the rancour of his enemies did not leave him long in peace. The Church found that her time of persecution was by no means ended, when the empire became nominally Christian. The heathen might no longer have power to oppress the disciples of the Lord Jesus; but false brethren proved to be not a whit less cruel and remorseless. In bitter hatred and inhuman ferocity against the true faith the Arians now fully equalled the pagans of former times. They still pursued their prey with unmitigated rage; and by the death in battle of Constantine II., Athanasius lost his principal friend and protector, although Constans professed to regard him with friendly feelings.

The Arians, at the close of the reign of the first Constantine, had devised a sure way of stimulating the jealousy of the Emperor against Athanasius. By a suggestion that the prerogatives of the monarch were being interfered with his suspicion and anger was easily roused. They had procured the first

banishment of their great opponent, by alleging that he had obstructed the corn trade between Alexandria and the imperial city. Constantius had now succeeded his father in the dominion of the East. His leaning towards the heretical party was so strong, that, the aged Bishop Alexander dying at Constantinople about this time, Constantius translated Eusebius of Nicomedia to fill the vacancy thus caused. His ear consequently was open to listen to the vile insinuations of the enemies of Athanasius, who lost no time in aspersing the character of their victim. Some corn had been given by the Government for purposes of charity to the widows in Egypt and Libya. This corn they declared that he had misappropriated. They said, further, that the day of his return to Alexandria had been stained with bloodshed ; and that he was guilty of an ecclesiastical offence in resuming, after deposition, the occupancy of his See without the sanction of a Council. The Eusebians then held a synod at Antioch, where Constantius had fixed his headquarters. This synod formally deposed Athanasius ; and thrust into his place, with the approval of the Emperor, one Gregory of Cappadocia. This man established himself in the city with the aid of Philagrius the Prefect ; and with the most atrocious profanity and cruelty. The sacred elements were dishonoured ; the virgins were stripped and beaten, and some of them were murdered ; the holy books were burned ; the churches and baptisteries were



defiled by foul orgies. Likewise in other parts of Egypt similar violence was exercised against the friends of Athanasius. Potammon of Heraclea, a very old man, the celebrated Bishop and Confessor, was beaten so cruelly that he died. Holy women were sold into slavery; they were publicly whipped, and driven from their homes. The orphans and widows of the Church were deprived of the bread dedicated to their use. Every imaginable indignity was cast upon the members of the Athanasian party. With the view of preventing additional desecration and bloodshed Athanasius withdrew from the city, and sought a place of concealment in the vicinity. There he wrote and dispatched an encyclical letter, in which he described the terrible miseries that had befallen the Egyptian Church. And soon afterwards he took ship, and sailed to Rome, to invoke the aid of Julius, the Bishop there at that time.

He was entertained by the Roman Bishop with great kindness. The Western Bishops assembled there in a Council fully justified Athanasius. Envoys had been sent to invite his accusers to attend, but they would not come; after long delay, they dismissed the messengers with scorn.

The sojourn of Athanasius at Rome was prolonged through several years. About that time died Eusebius of Nicomedia. This man had been preferred, as was before related, by the favour of the Emperor Constantius from Nicomedia to Constantinople. We have had frequent, indeed too frequent, occasion to mention his name. He

furnishes a sad example of ability and rank, scandalously misused, and of the infamous crimes which may be perpetrated in the sacred name of religion. Another event, of great consequence, occurred a few years later ; for then Gregory, who had usurped the Bishopric of Alexandria, was also removed by death. The merciless tyranny which he had exercised there had exasperated the people beyond endurance. Whether he died from natural causes, or whether he was murdered by some sufferers whom his inhuman ferocity had driven to desperation, does not appear to be quite certain. But these incidents, combined with other circumstances in disposing the Emperor, for a while at least, to look upon Athanasius, and the cause which he upheld, with a less prejudiced eye.

But let us again take up the thread of the narrative at the point where we have, for a few moments, let it drop.

In the summer of 343 A.D., Athanasius was called away from Rome. He received a letter from Constans requesting the Archbishop to join him at Milan. But he soon quitted that city, being commanded to proceed thence to Sardica.

Constans was Emperor of the West, Constantius of the East. Egypt and Alexandria was, of course, in the Eastern division of the empire, and subject to Constantius. But Constans strongly urged his brother to replace Athanasius in the position from which he had been unjustly expelled. An agreement was come to between the two Emperors that his cause should be heard, and adjudicated upon,



in a general Council, to be forthwith assembled, and to consist of Bishops both from the East and from the West. The place chosen for the Council was Sardica, now called Sophia, in Mœsia, within the territory of the Western Emperor ; but on the border-line between the two empires. Freedom from hostility to Athanasius was further manifested by the arrangement that the Council should be under the impartial presidency of the venerable and orthodox Hosius, the same prelate, it will be remembered, who had presided at Nicæa. The number of Bishops who now met together was a hundred and seventy. The greater part of them came from the West, and were in sympathy with the Nicene Creed. Conclusive evidence was adduced of the cruelties practised at Alexandria by the Arians. Instruments of torture used by them to compel communion with Gregory, were in the possession of the friends of Athanasius, and also letters, evidently forged with the view of poisoning the mind of the Emperor against him. The Eusebian party shrank from the encounter, and withdrew from Sardica. Careful and deliberate inquiry, sifting of evidence, examination of witnesses, resulted in Athanasius being pronounced innocent of the offences laid to his charge, and being restored with every expression of affection to his See.

He was still, however, under the interdict of Constantius. But the discovery of a vile conspiracy against Euphratos, the Bishop of Cologne, one of the emissaries sent by Constantius to

Antioch, framed by Stephen, the Arian Bishop of the latter city, justly incensed the Emperor. The detection of the plot led to the deposition of Stephen. And this circumstance, joined with the unprincipled conduct of the party on other occasions, excited the indignation of Constantius, and caused him to feel an earnest desire for the restoration of Athanasius. The death of Gregory occurring at this time, the way was open to him for giving effect to his wish. And he not only permitted, but hastened the return of Athanasius to Alexandria, offering him the use of the public carriages on his journey. His flock, who had been for about eight years deprived of their beloved pastor, welcomed him home again with joyful acclamation.

### THIRD EXILE.

In St. Athanasius we see the representative of the true doctrine of Holy Scripture, held and taught by the Catholic and Apostolic Church : in the persons of his adversaries we behold the teachers and followers of false doctrine, heresy, and schism. So when we peruse the history of the sufferings of this saint, and of the manner in which he was "destitute, afflicted, tormented ;" of his "wandering in deserts, and in dens and caves of the earth ;" we are reading the record of one of those faithful men "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. xi. 37, 38) ; and we may be sure that, as it has been in the past, so, in some measure, it is now, and must ever be, with all who believe and seek the heavenly promises.



Yet there appeared now to be some prospect of tranquillity. The political and ecclesiastical sky looked clear and serene ; and the storm-tossed vessel of the Church might hope to sail, for a while at least, upon a sea of quietness. The great Bishop was in his own city, and dwelling among his own people. Even enemies so bitter as Ursacius and Valeus sought for reconciliation with him, and begged to be admitted into communion with the Church. The friendly influence of the Western Empire prevailed, and the Emperor of the East ceased to exercise hostility against the orthodox, and showed aversion to the proceedings of the Arian party.

But changes for the worse were at hand, and clouds of trouble began to gather. In the year 350 A.D. Constans fell a victim to the accomplices of the usurper Magnentius. And eventually, after a lengthened campaign and many battles, Constantius, in 353 A.D., succeeded in establishing himself as the sole ruler of the Roman Empire.

The weak and fickle mind of the Emperor was easily wrought upon by artful and cunning men ; and the heretics knew well how to turn the instability of his character to account in pursuance of their own designs. They laid a plot to bring Athanasius under the displeasure of the Emperor. A letter reached Athanasius, implying that he had craved an interview with the Emperor, and summoning him to appear at court. Now Athanasius had made no such request, and, therefore, hesitated to obey, suspecting some underhand dealing. His

failure to comply at once with the imperial command, was represented by the Arian conspirators as an act of high treason ; and thus the heart of the monarch was embittered against the Bishop.

It is refreshing to turn aside, for a brief interval, from the scene of strife, and to rest the eyes on a beautiful picture of pious humility on the one hand, and of kindly encouragement and fatherly counsel, upon the other. The correspondence between Athanasius and Dracontius exhibits the mighty champion of controversy in the pleasing light of a wise and gentle pastor, full of tenderness and sympathy. Dracontius was a young priest, and the abbot of a neighbouring monastery. He had been elected to the Bishopric of a small diocese ; but he shrank apprehensively from the responsibility and difficulty of the position. Athanasius considered him eminently qualified for the office, and consecrated him to it. When he began to exercise his new functions, he was overwhelmed with confusion and distress, and fled away into the wilderness. Athanasius affectionately persuaded him to return to his duties ; reminding him that the life of a monk was not the only field for Christian self-denial ; and bidding him trust in God, and leave all issues to the Blessed Lord Himself.

The dispute between faith, on the one hand, and rationalism and unbelief, on the other ; between the followers of the true doctrine divinely revealed, and the faction that would believe no more than their finite minds could comprehend, came to a



climax in the Council of Milan. In the year 355, a large assembly of three hundred prelates was there convened. Constantius succeeded in coercing them to accept an Arian Creed, which he proposed to them, and to condemn Athanasius. A few only continued steadfast and true to their belief and to their God. "Obey, or be banished," was the stern mandate. Ursacius and Valeus recanted their recantation. But Lucifer of Cogliari and Eusebius of Vercellœ lifted up their hands to heaven, and dared to remind the Emperor of his responsibility to God, and of the account which he must give at the Day of Judgment. In a transport of rage he drew his sword against them. However, he contented himself with ordering their banishment.

There were still some good men of high authority in the Church who continued firm in their adherence to the cause of truth and righteousness, and to its illustrious upholder. The Court party combined artifice and compulsion in their efforts to win those men over to their own side. Hilary of Poitiers had taken up the controversy late in life ; his mastery of the whole subject was highly appreciated : and his acceptance of the Nicene Creed was cordially given as the result of diligent and profound study of the Holy Scriptures. He was forced to appear either at Arles or Milan : some false charge was invented against his moral character ; and this was found sufficient to effect his banishment.

There was one weighty name which they were most eager to detach from the Nicene interest.

They felt that any effort which they could make would be more than compensated, if they could win him over, or even if his opposition could be silenced or invalidated. Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, or Corduba, had presided at the Council of Nicœa. The lifetime of a generation had since elapsed ; and the good old man was bending under the burden of a hundred years. They contrived their plot with wicked ingenuity. He was forced to travel from Cordova to Sirmium. There he was kept in durance for twelve months. The confinement was cruel ; and he was vexed all the time with incessant persecutions. At length broken by suffering and extremity of age, he yielded so far as to consent to hold communion with Ursacius ; but nothing that his tormentors could do was sufficient to induce him to give up Athanasius. This he absolutely refused to do. And soon afterwards he died ; retracting his agreement with the heretics, and exhorting all around him to stand firm in the true faith, and to adhere to St. Athanasius.

Another victim of the crafty wiliness of the partizans who were now in favour with the rulers of the State, was Liberius, the Pope of Rome. He was far advanced in years when the storm burst upon him. He was at first outspoken and almost boastful in his assertions of orthodoxy. When carried before Constantius at Milan, he said ; "Though I were single, the cause of the faith would not fail. There was a time when three persons only were found who resisted a regal



ordinance." He was referring to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He courageously rebuked the Emperor for his tyranny and cruelty: "You are not," these were his words, "less unreasonable than Nebuchadnezzar in desiring to condemn a man unheard." But his constancy was not proof against a two years' exile, accompanied with threats of death. He yielded at last, and subscribed the Arian Creed, as Hosius was prevailed upon to do. But he did further what Hosius would never do, he condemned Athanasius. The Arian Creed was faulty, rather in what it left out, than in what it expressed. But the condemnation of Athanasius was an act much more inexcusable.

Athanasius, meanwhile, had not quitted his own city; he did not go to Milan, but remained still at Alexandria. A message was, indeed, brought to him, bidding him come and appear before the Emperor, but he had reason to distrust the good faith of the messenger. It would seem as if the Emperor had intimated, rather than expressed, his desire for the expulsion of the Bishop, and that his agents sufficiently understood his wishes to feel sure that they might safely proceed to acts which it was not his policy to put categorically into words. They watched, therefore, for an opportunity, and it was not long before one came in their way. The scene of the outrage, which resulted in the withdrawal of Athanasius into the wilderness, was the Church of St. Theonas. The hour was midnight, and the Bishop was engaged in conducting a vigil, preparatory to the celebra-

tion of the Holy Communion on the following day. The date was Thursday, February 8, 356. The principal officer, Syrianus, surrounded the church with 5,000 soldiers. The ill-boding uproar reached the ears of the Bishop, and he has described the circumstances with his own pen. "I considered," he says, "that it would be unfair in me to desert the people during such a disturbance, therefore I sat down upon my throne and desired the deacon to read Psalm cxxxvi., and the people to answer, 'For His mercy endureth for ever ;' and then all to depart." The church was dimly lighted with flickering lamps ; portions of it were enveloped in deep gloom. The door was burst open and the soldiers shot their arrows and struck with their swords, amidst the unarmed congregation. Sacrilegious outrages of every kind were perpetrated. The Bishop stood up, called for prayer and bade all leave before him. The people stole away in the darkness of the winter's night. When the soldiers advanced to lay violent hands upon the Bishop, he, too, was gone, and none knew whither. He passed through the crowd of his adversaries unnoticed—the Lord protecting His faithful servant—and thanked God for his own and his people's preservation. Athanasius was superseded by George of Cappadocia. A more offensive and insulting appointment could hardly have been made. For George was a coarse, ignorant, barbarous man ; yet possessed of worldly ability. Through his influence, supported by the secular arm, the friends



of the Nicene Faith were cruelly ill-used, and some died under their anguish. Arianism reigned, and glutted itself in blood. The Alexandrians were provoked to retaliation; but military force prevailed; and, after that unworthy Bishop had been once expelled, he returned still more terrible and more detested. In the end, he was murdered by the pagans in an insurrection against the Christians. The pagans had counted upon the favour of Julian the Apostate; but he reproved their lawless violence. The home of the persecuted saint was for six years in the desert. There among the monks he had a safe asylum. They could not but admire a man who was able to practise and bear holy austerities even better than themselves. Their fidelity to him was immoveable. They bared their necks to the swords of the pursuers; but firmly refused to utter a syllable in reply to the questions put to them, lest they should betray his hiding-place. An attempt was made to provoke him to discover himself by urging against him the imputation of cowardice. This was of a piece with other accusations with which his enemies persistently tried to blacken his character. It is of the nature of schism to split into divisions and sub-divisions; and the members of the several sects hate one another as bitterly as they all hate the truth. So those who could agree in nothing else agreed in their enmity against Athanasius. Yet, though hidden from sight, he sent forth apologies, encyclicals, discourses, comments and epistles which shook the world. Amongst them

were his celebrated discourses, or orations, against the Arians. These are reckoned to be the most important of his writings, the greatest of his many great works. Some brief account of them may fitly find place, indeed, is called for here. There appears in them a noble spirit of love for the truth, over-powering and consuming all other feelings, and a remarkable freedom from controversial animosity. He forbears from employing the particular words and phrases, which the Church had found it necessary to use in making her defence against Arian error and unbelief; it is about the truth, rather than about words, that he is solicitous; and he labours to declare and enforce the truth by Scripture, and by reason, and by the testimony of the holy Fathers.

#### DISCOURSE I.

Christ warns us against false teachers and seducers. By the grace of His Holy Spirit, He enables us to discern between false teachers and true. The devil deceived mankind by falsely pretending to goodness, and by misinterpreting the words of God. He found that the flesh which the Lord had assumed, could not sin; and then he fell into despair. The craftiness of Satan is exposed, and laid bare. When he speaks the truth, he is not to be trusted; for he does it only that he may corrupt the truth, and insinuate his own deceitful errors. Heretics act after the same manner; quoting Scripture, but not in the sense of Scripture; and saying some things truly, that they may the



more plausibly mingle their errors with the truth. Paul of Samosata denies the Word of God ; the Arians affirm the Word of God to be a creature ; both quote Scripture, but amiss. Let those who would not be ignorant of the devices of Satan, and who would gain acquaintance with Divine truth, study the Sacred Oracles. They put forth creeds with the view of superseding the Nicene Creed. And they write, not with the view of profiting the Church, but to hurt and kill the faithful. They aspired to prevail over all ; and appointed bad men of their own party to bishopricks. George, an idolator and a villain, they constituted Bishop of Alexandria. They are as slippery as eels ; and by turnings and twistings they try to hide their real character, and to make it appear that they are not enemies to Christ. The Nicene Faith is to be maintained. Heretics are not to be listened to, even when they cite the words of Scripture, and seem to say right things. They are then like wolves in sheep's clothing. Our Lord would not suffer the devil, the originator of all heresies, to speak, though he used the words of Holy Scripture. The Arians are anti-Christ. Faith consists, not in using the words of Scripture, but in believing the doctrine taught in the Scripture. They use the words of Scripture, only as a bait to entrap the unwary : and play with words, in order to instil thoughts that would never otherwise enter into simple minds. They talk a great deal about things which no one disputes : as if a physician, when called to a

wounded or sick man, should say much about the uninjured or healthy parts of his body, but never a word about the wound or sickness. It is as if a person accused of murder should argue to show that he was not guilty of a theft. Arius was expelled from the Church by Alexander, because he held and taught, that "God was not always a Father ;" and that "the Son did not always exist." Arius held and taught also, that Christ was by nature mutable, and remained good by His own free-will ; that He was made by God, and by Him God created all things ; that all things existed at His pleasure, and that He existed at the pleasure of God. Furthermore, Arius said that the Son could not perfectly know the Father ; because that which was made to be cannot perfectly understand Him Whose Being has no beginning. I cannot but abhor the man who teaches such doctrines. The Fathers of the Nicene Council stopped their ears when they heard these blasphemies ; and anathematized the author of them. The Fathers did this, acting under no constraint, but out of pure zeal for the truth. The Arians say, that the Word was created : but John, in the Scripture, saith, "In the beginning was the Word" (St. John i. 1). The Apostle blames the Gentiles, saying (Rom. i., 25), that "they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator : " but if they make Christ a creature, and yet worship Him, in what way do they differ from the Gentiles ? The Lord, speaking of Himself, saith, "I and My Father are one" (John



x., 30) : the Arians, however, make Him not one with the Father ; but put Him in the class of created things. The light, and the ray from it, are co-existent and consubstantial : so is the Son of God with the Father. If Christ be a creature, He can be neither the Creator, nor the Son and Word of God, nor the Wisdom of God : for the Creator of all things must Himself be uncreated ; the Son and Word of God is begotten, not made ; the Wisdom of God must have been with God from the beginning. The Son Himself saith, "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." (John xiv., 10.)

When the Father saith, "This is My beloved Son" (St. Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5), it is the same as saying, "My only Son." God is the Father of one Word, not of many ; and that Word hath the fulness of the Godhead (Col. i. 19, ii. 9) ; and "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ;" and, as the Apostle saith, "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. i. 23.) They foolishly say, that He understands not His own being—He who gives the knowledge of the Father ! "The Word was made flesh." (St. John i. 14.) As the Son of God, He hath all the attributes that belong to God ; as the Son of Man, He became subject to all the conditions of human existence.

The Arian heresy is not far removed from heathenism. The Psalm well describes the followers of it ; "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. Corrupt are they, and have

done abominable iniquity." (Ps. liii. 1.) Allied with Arius, the chief heretic, was Eusebius. The horrible death of Arius is referred to, and said to have been inflicted upon him by Divine vengeance. It is wonderful that any should be followers of an heresiarch whom God has so plainly condemned, that He would not suffer him to enter the Church.

The Arians persecute the orthodox, contrary to the expressed intentions of the Emperor Constantine. If the writings of the Arians could be trusted, they would have done away with Arius's book *Thalia*, and have abandoned his heresy. The revilings and persecutions of the Arians do not shake our faith in Christ ; for we are Christians, and not Arians. Be stedfast in the faith, and withstand every kind of heresy. Martyrdom consists, not only in refusing to worship idols, but in faithfully upholding the belief of the truth. Alexander, the Bishop, who, though aged and infirm, contended for the faith to the last, was as one who gave his life for it. Impious heretics and self-opinionated sectaries, who are at variance with one another, combine, like Herod and Pontius Pilate, in opposition to the truth.

The only reason why they hate us, and the other orthodox bishops, is because they wish to propagate their heresy. But let us before all things hold fast the truth, even unto death. The Eusebians threatened, if he would not join them, to persecute us. The Arians thirsted for the blood of Athanasius. He, and those who faith-



fully suffered with him, could say, "We have kept the faith." (2 Tim. iv. 7.) If ye are faithful, ye shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him ; "and may I have it," says the suffering saint, "together with you !"

## DISCOURSE II.

Other heresies may be easily detected, but the Arian heresy is subtle and deceitful ; and enters into the Church, as the devil entered into Paradise, with glozing words and specious pretensions. It is requisite, therefore, to lay bare the subtilty of this heresy ; so that darkness may no longer be mistaken for light, nor a lie for the truth, nor Arians for Christians. The Arians put Arius in the place of Christ, and call themselves Arians instead of Christians. But Christians are made such by Christ, and are called Christians after Him. When Alexander excommunicated Arius and his followers, those who adhered to Alexander were not denominated Alexandrians, but continued to be called Christians ; and the same remark applies to his successor, Athanasius. Those who abandon paganism and join the Church are called Christians ; those who leave the Church and join the heretics are called Arians. How can they be Christians who follow the writer of such a book as Arius's *Thalia* ? For *Thalia* is no Christian, but a heathen name ; and even among the heathens it is significant of lasciviousness and unseemly jesting.

Arius says, "God was not always a Father, there was a time when God was alone, and not yet a Father. The Word of God was made out of nothing." Arius denies that God the Father and God the Son are one; and has the audacity to affirm that the Son knows not the nature of God fully, but only according to the measure of His powers of understanding. He says that the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is not all one; that the glory is unequal, the Majesty not co-eternal. And these sublime and sacred subjects he handles in the silly songs in his Thalia.

The heretics say that Christ is not Very God, but is made God. The answer is, "The Word was God." (St. John i. 1.) Words could not more fully express the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. So the Arians, fearing lest their light should be put out (according as it is written), "The lamp of the wicked shall be put out" (Prov. xiii. 9), invoke the power of Constantine.

If they say, there was a time when the Son was not; in that case He cannot be of the same substance or essence with the Father, who is eternal. But Holy Scripture everywhere declares the Son to be co-eternal with the Father. St. Paul says, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. i. 24.) He does not say, God the Father is power; but Christ is His power; therefore His power must be consubstantial and co-eternal with Himself. So, in reply to Philip's request, "Show us the Father," Jesus



did not answer, Gain an insight into the nature of things, but, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." (St. John xiv. 6, 7.) And when the saints say, speaking of Christ, "He is before all things ; by Him also God made the worlds ;" this is the same thing as to declare that He is Very God.

Again, the Apostle tells the Hebrews (i. 3), that the Son of God is "The brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person ;" but who sees the light or the brightness without the rays ? If all space of time is contained in the measure of "the worlds," and the Word is the King and Maker of "the worlds," it follows that the Word must be antecedent to all creation. The Scriptures teach, concerning the Son, His eternity, His existence without beginning. Solomon saith (Prov. viii. 22-25), "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth ; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth." And Jesus Christ hath said (St. John viii. 58), "Before Abraham was, I am." That which is fitly spoken concerning things created, would be strange and contrary to the fitness of things and unsuitable when spoken of the Word. The Sacred Scriptures always speak of the Son as not made out of nothing, and as not being one of the creatures. When the heretics suppress the word *time*, in this

discussion, whilst they plainly imply it, they do so only for the sake of deceiving the unwary. When we say that the Word is co-eternal and consubstantial with God, the heretics declare that we might as well say, He is the Brother of God. A foolish remark ! because we do not say that He is the Brother, but the Son of God.

The Father and the Son are not created out of nothing, so that they should be brethren. But the Son is begotten of the Father ; and is so begotten from Eternity. For God is unchangeable, and the Father always was a Father ; nor was there ever a time when the Son was not His Son. It is absurd to talk as if God could ever have been without His Word, or His Reason, or His Wisdom ; even as light cannot be without brightness, or a fountain without a stream of water. Those who measure Divine and Eternal things by their own human and temporal experience, must needs greatly err. If God made all things by His Word, the Word cannot be among the things that are made, for in that case there would be inequality in the Trinity, or, rather, there would be no Trinity. Such opinions imply change in the Unchangeable Trinity. But the Trinity is Eternal, and the Trinity is the Creator and Maker of all things. If all things were made by the Word, He cannot be reckoned in the number of those things that were made by Him. Creatures have not like substance with their Creator.

Say the Arians, If the Son is in all respects the image of the Father ; in that case the Son must



Himself beget a son, and that son beget another, and so on for ever. But God is not like man ; God the Father is not begotten of any Father ; and His only-begotten Son is not so begotten that he should beget another son. The Father is always a Father, and never a Son ; the Son is always a Son, and never a Father. The Deity is immutable ; but if the Father should change, His Image and Brightness must also change. But we must not liken God to man, thus changing the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man. Herein their manner of arguing is absurd. Christ is said to create, not as man, but as God. An artificer works with material which he has ; but God produces things out of nothing. If the Reason or Word of God were made, God must have once been without Reason and without His Word. Who can listen to them saying that God was ever without Reason ? When men observe the blasphemous absurdities to which such opinions lead them, surely they must shrink from them with horror. Wisdom was never added to God ; but was always with Him.

The generation of God is not to be compared with the generation of men. To obviate any such ideas, the Son of God is called His Word and Wisdom and Brightness. Men are capable of wisdom, but God is Wisdom ; and the Son is the true offspring of the Father. If it be good that God should be a Father, and there was a time when He had no Son, it follows that there must

have been a time when He wanted some good ; but, in truth, the Godhead is immutable.

The relationship of the Creator to the creation is one thing ; the relationship of the Father to the Son is another thing. He that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father ; he that dishonoureth the Son, dishonoureth also the Father. One must not play with words on such a theme. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and forever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

Abraham in the tent worshipped Christ, and Moses in the bush. If, as the heretics say, Christ was not in heaven till He ascended thither in His human nature, how did He "bow the heavens and come down ?" or, how did "the Highest give His voice ?" (Ps. cxviii. 9-13.) He alone is Very God of Very God.

How did he receive Divine honour, who always had it ? This is no riddle, but a Divine mystery. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (St. John i. 1.) And when it is said, the Word was exalted ; this is spoken, not of the substance of the Word, who is God, but in respect of His humanity. The everlasting gates were not closed against the Lord and Creator of all things ; but opened to Him, entering in that human nature against which the door of Paradise had been shut. The Divine nature is not degraded by union with humanity ; but humanity is exalted by union with the Deity. Not to the Word, as the Word is grace given ; but to the Word made flesh for our sakes, that we,



through His Incarnation, might be made the temple of God, and sons of God.

In vain do the Arians urge the words of Paul (Phil. ii. 9), "*Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him : " for the words, "He exalted Him," "He gave Him," are spoken in respect of us and concerning us ; not in the sense of a *reward of virtue* being given to the Lord : thus the Church understands those expressions. "*Wherefore*," signifies, not *reward* of humiliation, but *cause* of exaltation ; He who humbled Himself being God Most High.

The same Person is the Son of God and the Son of Man. He may be said to receive from Himself : for the Godhead and Manhood being united in one Person, that which the Godhead giveth to the Human Nature Christ may be said to give unto Himself.

The Son, who giveth the Holy Spirit, is Himself, as man, anointed with the Spirit, for the sake of men. (St. John xvii. 19.) Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost, not as Aaron or David was, or any other man ; but "with the oil of gladness above his fellows." (Ps. xlv. 7.) He who giveth and receiveth, abides ever the same and unchangeable ; giving as the Word of God ; receiving, as Man. Since angels had sinned, and men were disobedient, only the Word, who is God, could deliver mankind.

The Word is, as to His flesh, anointed with the Spirit for our sakes ; He being unchangeable, we changeable. The first Adam changed from good to evil : the Second Adam is unchangeable ; and

so those who are and abide united unto Him, are delivered from sin and preserved from death : Ps. xlv. 7, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness," is the same as saying, that He, who is in His own nature righteous, loveth the upright and hateth the wicked.

In the words (Heb. i. 4), "Being made so much better than the angels," "made better" signifies, not comparison, but distinction. The term "made" means not here "created," but "was," or "was manifested to be." Like must be compared with like. None would compare God with man, or man with God, or man with the brutes. Created things may perish ; the Creator cannot perish : so it is written, "They shall perish ; but thou remainest." (Heb. ii. 11.) The sacrifice of Christ, the hope in Him, the promises that are through Him, are better than those things which were the patterns of them, not as great things are compared with small, but as things that are in nature diverse. "The Word was made flesh." (St. John i. 14.) The flesh was made, the Word was not made. That which the Godhead of the Father is, the same likewise is the Godhead of the Son. The Son sitteth on the right hand of the Father ; that is to say, on the same throne with Him. Whosoever seeth the Son, seeth the Father ; because He is one and the same God. The Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father. Where it is said that the Son was "made better than the angels" (Heb. i. 4), the meaning is, not that He was made, or created ; but that His ministry is



better than theirs ; they acting as servants under the authority of God ; He speaking and acting with His own Divine authority. If there were no distinction of nature between the Son and the angels, the word "made" would mean "created ;" and the Son Himself would be a ministering spirit, sent forth as the angels are to minister : but since it is written by St. Paul, "Unto which of the angels said He, Thou art My Son ;" since He created all things, and, therefore, the angels ; it is manifest that the word "made," relates not to the substance of the Word, but to the office and ministry which He executes in His human body. The Word was not made : but the Word was made man ; and exercises a better office than that of the angels, inasmuch as the Son is greater than the servants are, and the Maker than His works. Then Christ was made an Helper, and a House of Refuge, when He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree ;" and when He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." The help which God through His Son affordeth to any, this, men are wont to say, God is made unto them : even as a human benefactor is said to become, or to be made, a help. So when it is said of Christ, that He "was made better than the angels," this phrase is to be understood of His ministry, and of the dispensation which He introduced when He was made man. It signifies not that His substance was created or made ; but it indicates the benefits and blessings bestowed upon man in consequence of the Lord's Incarnation.

## BOOK III.

The Arians pervert the meaning of the word "made," in Prov. viii. 22 [rendered "possessed," E.V.], and used by the Apostle in Heb. iii. 2 [rendered "appointed," E.V.]—"faithful to him that appointed him"—as if it meant that the Son of God was some work of His hands, or a thing created by Him. Yet God can by no means be esteemed a work ; for it is the peculiar property of creatures and works that they should be produced out of nothing, and that they should have had no existence before they were made. The word "made" is, however, used without any derogation of the Divine Glory of Christ, by John, "The Word was made flesh" (i. 14) ; by Peter (Acts ii. 36), "God hath made" Him "Lord and Christ ;" and by Solomon (Prov. viii. 22), "The Lord created [possessed, E.V.] me in the beginning of His ways ;" also by Paul (Heb. i. 4), "Being made so much better than the angels ;" and again (Phil. ii. 7), "Made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant ;" and yet once more (Heb. iii. 1, 2), "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ, who was faithful to him that made [appointed, E.V.] him." All these places, piously understood, show, at the same time, both the Divinity of the Word, and what is predicated of His Humanity, in that He was born, and made the Son of Man. If Christ is not the Son of God,



but only a creature of God, then is God not a Father, but only a Creator ; in that case, He has no image of His substance. How could God create, who created all things by His Word, if He had no Word ? The Son of God made all things, not as a creature empowered by God to do it, but by His own power, because He is God. Words must be taken according to their meaning in the places where they are used. The words "made" and "created" are to be understood according to their subject ; if spoken of a creature, they signify creation ; but if spoken of the Divine substance, they signify "begetting" or "appointing." In Holy Scripture sons are sometimes called servants to their parents : as, for instance, Bathsheba speaking to David, styles Solomon "thy son" (1 Kings i. 17), and "thy servant" (19) ; yet Solomon was by nature the son of David. Similarly, when Christ is spoken of as a servant, do not suppose that the term implies Him to be any other than the true and proper Son of God, equal to the Father as touching His Godhead. Sometimes "I make" is put for "I beget," sometimes "to make" stands for "to prepare" or to "bring forth." [These remarks apply mostly, though not exclusively, to the Latin version of the Holy Scriptures]. So then the passage (Heb. iii. 1, 2) "Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed" [Greek, made] "him," cannot avail the heretics, but condemns them. Solomon saith in Ecclesiastes (xii. 14), "God shall bring every *work* into judgment."

Therefore, if the Word be a *work* of God, He must be brought into judgment. But He is the Judge of all. How should the Judge be judged? To what law should the Lawgiver be subject? If any be troubled, because it is written (Heb. iii. 1 and 2), "Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed" [Gr. made] "him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house," let such an one understand that "faithful" has one meaning, when applied to God; and another meaning, when it is spoken of man. Moses saith (Deut. vii. 9), "He is a God, the Faithful God;" and St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 13), "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." Faithful, spoken of God, means that *men may securely put faith in Him*; and "faithful," spoken of men, means that *they truly have faith in him*. "Christ Jesus was faithful to him that appointed [Gr. made] him," means that He, being the true Son of God, is worthy to have faith placed in Him. The words of the Apostle, in Heb. iii. 1 and 2, have their application, not prior, but subsequent to the Incarnation of Christ. The Apostle did not mean—God forbid that he should—to speak of the substance of the Word, or of His eternal generation from the Father, when he said, "He was faithful unto him that appointed [made] him." Aaron was not born high priest, but when, and in such manner as God pleased, he was made high priest—so the Word was in the beginning; but when the Father willed that He should be offered for the redemption of all men, He was



invested with flesh, as Aaron was with the sacerdotal robes ; and He was made both the High Priest and the Sacrifice, offering Himself to God, to take away the sin of the world.

“The Word was made flesh.” The Word was not created ; but the Man was made faithful to His Creator. Who that beheld the Lord walking as man, yet by His works showing Himself to be God, would not ask himself, Who made this so great man ? And would not answer, The Father made Him man, and sent Him to be our High Priest ; as the Apostle saith in his Epistle to the Hebrews, ii. 14, and iii. 1, 2 ? He is merciful and faithful : merciful, because He shows mercy to us by offering Himself for our sakes ; and faithful, not because He has faith in any one, but because being Himself the Priest and the Sacrifice, we may have faith in Him. The legal sacrifices had nothing in themselves in which men might trust. God alone of all is true and faithful, and to be trusted in, because He only is ever the same ; as it is said, “I am the Lord, I change not.” (Mal. iii. 6.) Likewise, of the Son of God, the Scripture saith, “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful : he cannot deny himself (2 Tim. ii. 13). Paul speaking of the Priesthood made mention of the Humanity of Christ ; but he hastens, such is his carefulness in this matter, to subjoin the mention of His Deity. Moses was faithful, as a servant *in* the house of the Lord ; but Christ over His own house, whereof He is the Founder, Lord, and Builder. The Word of God was made Man,

in order to sanctify the flesh. All creation is a servant of the Word ; for He created and made it : but the Lord took on Him the form of a servant. The words "was made" apply to His human nature. When He took our nature, He became our Brother. If there should be any place where "made" evidently means "begotten," no dispute ought to arise about it. The Manhood was created : the Divine Word was not created or made. So when Peter in the Acts said (ii. 36), "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," it is not written that He made Him to be His Son, or made Him to be His Word. The miracles which Christ wrought, showed Him to be not a mere man, but God and Lord Incarnate. As it is said in the Gospel by John (x. 38), "Though ye believe not me, believe the works ; that ye may know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." The Jews perfectly understood that He claimed to be truly God : for after He had said (St. John v. 17, 18), "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." St. Peter said (Acts ii. 36), "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Here "made" means "declared." Our Lord was worshipped as God before His Incarnation. Abraham worshipped Him, where Moses saith (Gen. xix. 24), "The Lord rained upon Sodom



and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." David in the Psalter sings (Ps. cx. 1), "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;" and (Ps. xlv. 6), "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre." He was King and Lord eternal, and the Image and Word of the Father, before He became man; but He was made King and Lord when He assumed man's nature, and began, as man, His rule over us. Christ came, and by doing works which none other man ever did, proved himself to be God. And He came at the time foretold by Daniel for the Advent of the Messias. David is dead, and the prophets; but it was fitting that He who gave life to others, should not Himself be held under the tyranny of death.

It was unfitting that in anyone who was a mere man the Divine power and majesty should be displayed lest we should be worshippers of men. But the Father made His own Son, even His Word, to be Lord and Christ; which is as much as to say, that the Father made the same Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, the object of universal adoration to whom every knee should bow, and that we should acknowledge Him to be Lord and King, and Son of the Father, and through Him should come to the knowledge of the Father.

Because Christ is the Son of God it follows that He is like God, and none can be truly like God, but He who is God and Lord and King. Good

and true is the confession of St. Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (St. Matt. xvi. 16.) Christ giveth the Spirit: but to give the Spirit at His pleasure is not the part of any creature; but it is the office of God. Creatures are sanctified by the Holy Ghost; the Son, however, is not sanctified by the Spirit, but giveth the Spirit to all; it therefore appears that He is not a creature, but the true Son of the Father. For He ever both is and was, and is the Son, like to the Father in all things, and possesseth all things which are the Father's, as He Himself has declared.

The heretics deceitfully obscure their meaning in a cloud of words, affirming that, although the Son is created, yet He is not such as any other of the creatures. A vain distinction! for if He be a creature, He must be as other creatures are; but if He be uncreated, He is God. It is a vain, delusive manner of speaking, to call Him a creature, and yet not a creature. Begetting is one thing: creating is another thing. (St. John v. 17.) "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," are words which no created being could presume to utter—but only the Divine Word, the true and proper Son of the Father. Here it is signified that the Son exists eternally in the Father. It is the property of the Reason or Word of God to work the works of the Father. No creature can make itself: and if the Son be a creature, the Father made something which the Son did not make. But "all things were made by him; and



without him was not anything made that was made." (St. John i. 3.) If God only wrought upon matter already existing, He must be deemed an Artificer rather than a Creator ; but seeing that He made all things out of nothing by His Word, it follows that the Word must be God, even as the Father is God. No creature can know God, or reveal Him ; but it is written (St. Matt. xi. 27) : "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

The angel said to Manoah, "If thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord." (Judges xiii. 16.) But Christ is to be worshipped, "Let all the angels of God worship him." (Heb. i. 6 ; Ps. xcvi. 7.) "Ye call me Master and Lord," saith Christ ; "and ye say well ; for so I am." (St. John xiii. 13.) Thomas owned Jesus, and said to him, "My Lord and my God." (St. John xx. 28.) "All things that the Father hath are mine" (St. John xvi. 15), could be said of none but the Divine, Uncreated, only-begotten Son. It is the part of the son to possess the property of his father.

The heretics assert that God, willing to produce created nature, created first One, whom He called His Son and Word, and by Him made all the rest. But the Lord needeth not to devolve part of His work upon another, as if He were weary of it ; for Esaias saith, "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary : there is no searching of his understanding" (Is. xl. 28) ; neither is anything

so small that He should disdain to notice it, or require a vicar or substitute to attend to matters beneath His own consideration ; for, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father, which is in heaven. (St. Matt. x. 29.) But if the hairs of the head, sparrows, the grass of the field, are not matters too inconsiderable for God to care about, neither is it beneath His dignity to create them. Supposing that a mediator must intervene between the Divine Being and the making of things created, it would follow as an inevitable consequence that there could be no creation at all. Their doctrine implies stinting and feebleness in God : stinting, in that He only made one creator, and not many ; feebleness, in that He could not make the world without the help of a fellow-worker and assistant. The Son Himself said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (St. John v. 17.) But wherefore should the Father work, if the Son was created to do all things in His stead ? The will of God, moreover, is sufficiently powerful to effect whatsoever He pleases ; and, therefore, the creation of the Son to be the mediatorial instrument of creation was superfluous.

Take another point which exhibits the impiety of their opinions. According to them the Son was created, not for His own sake ; but that we might be brought into existence : as "the man was not created for the woman ; but the woman for the man." (1 Cor. xi. 9.) And as "the man is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. xi. 7), even



so must we be the image of God, and be created for His glory ; but the Son, on the contrary, must be the image of us, and have begun to exist for our glory. He, therefore, owes thanks to us for His being ; not we to Him. How monstrous is the madness and profanity of such notions ! Should they say, that God *designed* to make man, and subsequently designed to make His Son for the sake of us ; yet it is written, " All things were created by Him " (*i.e.*, the Son), " and for Him : and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (Col. i. 16-17.) Between the Father and the Word is no question or answer ; for the Father is in the Word, and the Word is in the Father ; it sufficeth to will, and the work is done. No man ever saw light without brightness ; and none can say that the express image of a person is unlike the person.

Mortal man is not capable of understanding the nature of God. As the ray of light from the sun is consubstantial with the sun, and is not divided from it ; even so the Son of God is consubstantial with the Father, and is not divided from Him : and thus the Saviour taught, saying, " The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works " [that I do] (St. John xiv. 10) ; and, " I and my Father are one " (St. John x. 30) ; and, " I am in the Father, and the Father in me." (St. John xiv. 10.)

The word of a man and the Word of God are not alike. The word of a man is only a sound expressing the meaning of his mind, but it has no real existence ; the Word of God, on the contrary,

is a living person ; He is God, and the Image of God : "The Word," saith the Evangelist, "was God." (St. John i. 1.) Vain it were to enquire why the Word of God is not like as the word of man ; because God is not as man. It becomes not us to ask, how the Word is God ? how He is the brightness of God ? how God begetteth Him ? what the manner of the generation of God may be ? Such matters belong to God only, and are known to His Son alone. It is better, where you cannot understand, to be silent, and to believe ; than to disbelieve, because you are unable to understand. The study of the Holy Scripture may furnish you with reasons for believing.

That the Son is one God with the Father appears in the formula of Baptism. And that formula is given to us by our Saviour Himself. The Son is named with the Father in Holy Baptism, because where the Father is, there likewise is the Son ; as where light is, there is brightness : and whom the Father baptizeth, the same the Son baptizeth ; and whom the Son baptizeth, he commenceth to be in the Holy Ghost. For whatsoever the Father doeth, the same doeth the Son likewise. Such as deny the Divinity of the Son of God, deny likewise the Father : for He is not a true Father, if He have not a true Son of His own nature. The Arians, according to their own account, baptize in the Name of the Creator, and of a creature ; of the Maker, and of a thing made : which is absurd. Although they use the formula of Baptism, because they



find it in the Scripture, they are none the less heretics ; for they deny the true meaning of the words.

The heavenly bodies, differing one from another in glory, were all of them created by the Word of God : they are *works* of God. But the Word of God was "with him in the beginning of his way, *before* his works" (Prov. viii. 22) ; and is God. The Word existing from eternity, took upon Him a created nature, in order that He might be like the things which God has made. "The Word was made flesh," that He might effect the restoration of mankind. So in Phil. ii. 6-8, after "Being in the form of God," no cause or reason of His Being follows ; but to "take upon him the form of a servant," there is subjoined, "Humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Again ; "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (St. John xiv. 10) ; "I and my Father are one" (St. John x. 30) ; "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (St. John xiv. 11) ; "I am the light of the world" (St. John viii. 12) ; "I am the truth" (St. John xiv. 6) ; all these statements are absolute, without any cause or reason for His being such annexed. On our account He took on him a created nature, in order that we might be created in Him. Although the Son of God took man's nature, which is a created nature ; yet the Person of the Son was not created, but is the Creator.

Generation is to be discriminated from creation : the Word was *begotten* of the Father ; but the

Word was *made* flesh. It is written of Creation, "in the beginning God made it"; but of the Word, "in the beginning was the Word": and thus always the Holy Scripture expresses itself. God made men; and calleth His chosen people His sons. In this latter case the begetting is not natural; but is by adoption and grace. Thus Malachi distinguishes (ii. 10): "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" But, "having received the adoption of sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father." (Gal. iv. 5, 6.) Thus God became our Brother.

He is the *Only-begotten* Son of God; but "the *First-begotten* of the dead" (Rev. i. 5), "the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) (Col. i. 15.) "The first-born of every creature": therefore, say the Arians, Christ is a creature. Foolish men! It is not said, The first-born of all *other* creatures; but, "of every creature"; that is, *before* every creature: as (16), "By him were all things created"; therefore He could not be one of the things created: and (17), "He is before all things." He in whom "all things consist" (17) cannot Himself be one of those created things, which all consist in Him.

The Word was made flesh to restore mankind; because it was unfitting that the work of God should remain impaired. If the Word had been a creature, He could not have joined creatures to God, or have taken sin away: as it is written in the Prophets, "Who is a God like unto thee, that



pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by . . . transgression?" (Mic. vii., 18.) God bindeth, and God looseth. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (St. John viii. 36.) Consequently, the Son is no creature, but is God. The way which God chose for effecting His purpose of mercy, was the best way: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and that He might work our salvation." (St. Matt. xx., 28.) The creature could not be reconciled to God by a creature. For this cause God the Father sent His own Son; and He is made the Son of Man. And "where he is, there shall we be also" (St. John xiv. 3); and we shall no more be afraid of the Serpent. But such security could not be given by any creature: nor could a man sit on the right hand of God, unless the Word made flesh were the very and natural Son of God.

As he that entereth into a house, is no part of the house; so Christ, being God, assumed human nature, and was made man. ["One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance: but by unity of Person." Athanasian Creed.] The Spirit speaketh in the Psalms with beautiful discrimination; "The Word of the Lord is right: and all his works are done in truth." (Ps. xxxiii., 4.) But if the Word were a work, the Scripture would not have distinguished Him from the works. The like distinction is made by Paul, writing to the

Hebrews, "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv., 12-13.) Behold! he calls the things that are made "creature"; but the Son he acknowledges to be the Word of God. St. Peter truly confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (St. Matt. xvi. 16.) This he knew to be true, and the pillar of our faith. Christ is the foundation; therefore, He is not the founded. Christ, in that He is Man, is the foundation of the Church: Christians are stones of His house. He was made Man for our sakes.

God foresaw the fall of man, and in His love and pity fore-ordained the means of his restoration. Thus St. Paul teaches, "God . . . hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. i. 8-11); and, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world . . . having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." (Eph. i. 4, 5.) And our Lord Himself said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the



kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (St. Matt. xxv. 34.) We were chosen in Him before the world began, that we might be saved in Him when the world shall pass away.

Our salvation is in Christ ; a fact which of itself sufficiently establishes the Divinity of Christ. So truly and entirely are the Son and the Father one, that the Lord Himself said, "He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me" (St. Mark ix. 37.)

Uncreated Wisdom is the Archetype and Origin of all things ; created Wisdom is the image and likeness of the uncreated. St. John saith, "He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." (1 St. John ii. 23.) It is no longer the time of types and shadows ; but God hath commanded that the true Wisdom itself should take flesh and be made man, and suffer death upon the Cross, that through faith which is in Him all who believe might be saved. The Father rejoiceth beholding Himself in the Son ; and the Son rejoiceth beholding Himself in the Father. So that these two sentences are equivalent, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and "The Father is in me, and I am in the Father." (St. John xiv. 9, 10.)

## BOOK IV.

The impious and shameless Arians say, How can the Father, who is greater, be in the Son who is less? What wonder is it that the Son be in the Father, when it is written of us that "In him we live and move and have our being?" (St. John xiv. 10; Acts xvii. 28.)

They will not raise their minds above worldly and carnal imaginations, nor acknowledge that there is Very Father, Very Son; and the Son of the same nature with the Father. It is not like as one vessel is filled from another vessel; such ideas are earthly and belong to bodily substances. The Father is full and entire, and the Son is the fullness of the Godhead; not as holy men are filled with the Spirit, but the Son is begotten of the Father. Neither again is He in the Father, as we in Him live and move and have our being. For He is life, and floweth from the Father, as from a fountain, in which all things are quickened and consist. Life liveth not through life; otherwise it would not be fully life; but rather Life giveth life to all things.

Now mark the sophistries of Asterias: he says, It is clear and manifest, that He therefore said, that He is in the Father, and the Father in Him; because He means to declare, that His words are not His own, but the Father's; and His works are not His own, but the Father's, who gave Him the power to do them. If a child spoke thus in his simplicity, he might be pardoned;



but not a sophist who claims to understand all wisdom. He confounds the Son and the creature.

Christ saith, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (St. John xiv. 10); but David orders his speech thus, "I will hear what the Lord God will speak *in me* (Lat. Vulg. Ps. lxxxv. 8); and Solomon likewise, "Wisdom crieth. . . . I will make known my words unto you" (Prov. i. 23); and Moses gives us his words, as being those which he had received from God; and every one of the prophets speaketh after the same manner. Elijah and Elisha called upon God to raise the dead: when Elisha cured Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy, it was, as he said, "that thou mayest know that God is in Israel" (2 Kings v. 8-15): again, "Samuel called unto the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain" (1 Sam. xii. 18): the Apostles declared that they wrought not their miracles by their own power, but to show the grace of God (Acts iii. 12): but the Lord said, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me," in order to signify that He was different from, and superior to, all others. He said what belongs to Himself, alone.

The Son is in the Father, as a ray from light, as a river from a fountain; the Father is in the Son, as the sun is in its rays, as the mind is in reason, as a fountain is in the river that flows from it. Having said before (St. John x. 30), "I and my Father are one," He saith here, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me," that He might

demonstrate identity of Godhead and unity of essence. The Father is one Person, the Son is another Person ; but the Father and the Son are one God. Hence it is written (St. John i. 1), "The Word was God," and all the attributes of God are in Holy Scripture ascribed to the Son. And accordingly Christ saith, "All things that the Father hath are mine" (St. John xvi. 15); and conversely, "All mine are thine" [*Mea omnia tua sunt*—Vulgate] (St. John xvii. 20.) So these three places, "I and my Father are one" (St. John x. 30), "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (St. John xiv. 10), and "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (St. John xiv. 9), all have one and the same meaning.

In like manner, "The image of God," and "The form of God" signifies the substance of the Deity ; and the Son is therefore perfect God ; and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (Phil. ii. 6.) Because the Deity and form of the Son is no other than that of the Father, hence He saith, "I am in the Father" ; and so, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. v. 19) ; for the Son, in whom the creature is reconciled to God, is the proper substance of the Father.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son ; for all things that the Father hath, the Son hath. We believe in God the Father, but belief in the Father involves belief in the Son ; for a father must have a son. So there is one faith and one God. Where it is said, "See now that I, even I,



am he, and there is no god with me" (Deut. xxxii. 39), and, "I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God" (Is. xlv. 6) ; it is to be understood that the Son is in the Father, the one Word, Wisdom, and Brightness of the first and last and only One. The Godhead of the Son is, in those places, affirmed, not denied. Christ Himself, claiming to be the Son of God, and Very God, taught that there is one God and one alone. The words, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus xx. 3), and similar words of Holy Scripture were never intended to deny that the Son is God, but to forbid belief in the many gods which mankind had invented.

That which God spake concerning this matter, He spoke by His Word.

Had Jesus Christ not been truly God, but a creature, He would not have conjoined and reckoned Himself with the Father, as in St. John xvii. 3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent ;" no creature could thus have joined himself with his Creator. But St. John in his Epistle, 1 John v. 20, plainly asserts the Godhead of Christ, saying, "And we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This (*i.e.* Jesus Christ) is the true God, and eternal life." When the prophet saith concerning the creation of the world, "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens" (Job ix. 6), and when God Himself speaketh concerning Himself, saying, "I

am the Lord that stretcheth forth the heavens alone (Is. xlv. 24), anyone may see, for it is quite manifest, that as included in this word "alone," is to be understood His Holy Word, "by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made." (St. John i. 3.) Where God saith, "I am the first, and I am the last ; and beside me there is no God" (Is. xlv. 6), these words are spoken, not of time, but of eternity. God does not reckon His Son with the creatures whom He made, but with Himself, as the original and cause of all things. As the Father is the First, even so the Son is the First ; being the Image of the First, in whom the First is, the Seed of the Father, and He by whom all things were made. If we are "the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. xi. 7), it is because God so created us ; and if we are at all in mind like God it is because the Very Image and True Glory of God, Who for our sakes was made flesh, dwelleth in us.

The ray of light, and the sun which sends it forth, are of the same substance. St. Paul to the Thessalonians says (1 Thes. iii. 11) "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you" ; declaring herein the unity of the Father and the Son, by using the singular number of the verb "direct" ; and thus indicating that the grace was given, not by two, but by One ; and was by the Father through the Son. No one prays to receive from God *and* from angels or any created things. When Jacob blessed



Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. xlviii. 15, 16), the Angel whom he coupled with God, was no created angel ; but the Word of God ; even the same with whom Jacob had wrestled (Gen. xxxii. 24), and of Whom he said, " I have seen God face to face." (30). It is the part of an angel to obey the commands of God ; and that which an angel doeth, he doeth not himself ; but God doeth it by him. An angel could not speak thus ; " Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." (Gen. xxviii. 15.) David, Paul, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob looked for blessing and deliverance from God alone, and ascribed it to Him only. Those who saw visions knew what they saw : Zacharias saw an angel, Isaiah saw God ; Manoah saw an angel, Moses saw God ; Gideon saw an angel, Abraham saw God : and at the Bush, an angel appeared to Moses, but God spake to him in the angel.

The Son and the Father are one : therefore, whatsoever the Father worketh, the Son worketh ; whatsoever the Son giveth, the Father giveth ; whosoever hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father ; whosoever heareth the Word, heareth the Father. The Arian opinions are impious. The Arians make two Gods ; one the Creator, the other created. So they have two faiths, and serve two Lords. Of a created being it cannot be said, that the Creator is in him, and he in the Creator ; or that he that seeth him, seeth the Creator. The Arians are virtually pagans, though they deceitfully avoid using the language of the heathen. The

Arians who deny the Divinity of Christ, are worse than the Jews, who refuse to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and Christ.

God is one, and not many ; and His Word is one, and not many ; for the Word is God. The Son is one with the Father in nature and substance. The cavils of the Arians are not to be listened to. That which they are made by munificence and grace, they audaciously presume to give them equality with their Creator and Benefactor. Adam is a man, and Paul is a man ; but the Word is God. We are not the Word or Wisdom : and He is not a creature, or anything that is made ; but the Only-begotten of the Father. The true meaning of the words of Christ entirely contradicts the strange opinion of those enemies of Christ. For Christ said not, that they may be one in Thee ; but that, as I in Thee, and Thou in me, they may be one. (St. John xvii. 21.) Not identity or parity is signified by the word "as," but such similitude as the nature of the things compared may allow. The Son is one with the Father in nature and essence : Christians are one in the Body of Christ, which He assumed for their salvation : thus man is united to God through Christ, who is the one Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Hence the Lord saith, "That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us" (St. John xvii. 21), *i.e.*, Work in them therefore, I pray thee, O Father, and as Thou hast given me that I



should bear this Body, so give Thy Spirit that they may be in it (*i.e.*, in my Body), and may be made perfect in me. Those who are thus made partakers of the Divine nature in Christ should keep the bond of charity one with another. John the Apostle, lest any in time to come should talk as the Arians talk, wrote thus in his Epis<sup>tle</sup>, "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because he hath given us of His Spirit." (1 St. John iv. 13.) Not then as the Son is in the Father, so are we in the Father; for the Son subsisteth not in the Father by the Spirit, neither doth the Spirit join the Son to the Father; but rather the Spirit receiveth that from the Word [*i.e.*, the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son]. And John speaketh again (1 St. John iv. 15), "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God [*i.e.*, this indwelling is by faith.] Christ Himself bestoweth the Spirit; and whatsoever the Spirit hath, that He receiveth from the Word. When we have received the Spirit, we are by the Spirit made one in the Word, who is in the Father, and thus we are in the Father. The Spirit dwelleth in us by grace; but He exists by nature, and in very reality in the Father. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance to every one that continueth stedfast in the belief and love of the truth; but if any man fall back, the spirit of the Lord departeth from him, as it did from Saul. The Arians urge that the Son need not have prayed to the Father, if He were of

the same nature as the Father. Those malicious heretics say many things foolishly and blasphemously. They might as well say that the Word could not be made flesh, nor God be incarnate. Their heresy is equal and similar to the unbelief of the Jews. (St. John x. 33.) The Arians have learnt their impiety and cruelty from the Jews. Both Arians and Jews alike err through not rightly believing and confessing the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The duty of Christians is to believe the Gospel, and to renounce the blasphemies of Arius. Some eternal things are created, as for instance the eternal gates of heaven (Ps. xxiv. 7-9), but these things being made, were made by Him who made all things, even the Word (St. John ii. 3); but they have not the like eternity with the Father, as the Son, who had no beginning, and who ever was, being begotten from everlasting of the Father, has. Those foemen of Christ wrest the Holy Scriptures to their own destruction, because they do not perceive the end and design of the Christian Religion. That end and design is to reveal the Saviour in a two-fold character : firstly, as eternally God and the Son of God, because He is the Word and the Ray and the Wisdom of the Father ; secondly, as man ; the same Word having for our sake taken flesh and been born of the Virgin Mary. Accordingly He said, "Search the Scriptures ; for they are they which testify of me." (St. John v. 39.) The teaching of Scripture is the same from the beginning to the end, viz., firstly, that



the Son was begotten from everlasting of the Father, and is He to whom the Father said, "Let there be light . . . . Let there be a firmament . . . . Let us make man" (Gen. i. 3, 6, 26); secondly, that the same Son, in the end of the world, was sent into the world by the Father, as it is written, "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel (Is. vii. 14; St. Matt. i. 23). Emmanuel, being interpreted, is, God with us." (St. Matt. i. 23.) Thus, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (St. John i. 14.)

He was made man : He came not into a man who was already existing. Had it been so, those who beheld Him would never have burst out with these words, "What manner of man is this?" (St. Matt. viii. 27); or, "Thou, being a man, makest thyself God." (St. John x., 33.) For they had been accustomed to hear the Word of God speaking by the prophets; but now they heard the Divine Word in His own Person speaking to them. Christ was made the Word to the prophets: but when the time came that He should "suffer for us in the flesh" (1 Pet. iv. 1), He was "made of a woman, made under the law. (Gal. iv. 4.) Then the Divinity dwelled in flesh [in "Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. ii. 9]. That He was hungry, thirsty, suffered, was weary, and similar infirmities of the flesh, showed His true Humanity; His miracles of raising the dead, restoring sight to the blind, healing the issue of blood, and other like works of

the Divine power of the Word, manifested His Godhead. Being God, He was made Man, and used His Body as an instrument for our salvation. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." (St. Matt. viii. 17; Is. liii. 4), as the prophet spake. The Body, in which He bare our sins, was His very own. (1 Pet. ii. 24.) The works of His Father which He Divinely wrought, He performed, not apart from His flesh, but in His own Body. So when He was made man, He used these words, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." (St. John x. 37, 38.) When He raised up Peter's wife's mother from the bed of fever; as Man, He stretched out His hand; as God, He put a stop to the disease (St. Matt. viii. 14, 15); and He acted similarly in other instances. These things were done to make it clear that His Body was no imaginary, but a true and real body. The sufferings which He endured in the flesh, were not the sufferings of another, but His own sufferings. The sufferings which He underwent, were His own, and not another's; so that they are rightly and fittingly called the Lord's Passion: and we understand that grace comes from Him, and not another; and that we should worship Him and not another. For if the works of Deity had not been wrought by the Body of the Word, the Manhood would not have been taken into God; and man would



not have been completely delivered from the sinful infirmities of the flesh ; but as " death had reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression " (Rom. v. 14) ; so would it have continued to be : whereas now, " being reconciled to God by the death of His Son . . . we shall be saved by His life." (Rom. v. 10.) Had not, in the one Person of Christ, two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, been joined together never to be divided, it might have seemed as if He might have left our human nature to itself, and that we might have again fallen and perished. But now mortals and sinners, rising again according to the power of the Word, are made to be, and to continue for ever to be, immortal and incorruptible : and as in Adam all die ; even so we all are made to live by the life of the Living Word, being made one with Him who for our sake was made flesh. (1 Cor. xv. 52.)

The Divinity is impassible ; the Humanity passible. Let us give good heed to the blessed Peter. That worthy witness to the faith of Christ writeth thus in his Epistle, " Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh." (1 Pet. iv. 1.) All that He suffered was *for us*. For this reason the Apostle spake after this manner, viz., " Christ suffered," not in the Godhead, but " in the flesh," and that too " for us ;" in order that we should understand, that passion appertains not to the nature of the Word, but to the nature of the flesh. And we

being translated into Him who is impassible, and our passions perishing in Him, we are set free from sin and suffering for ever : and thus John teacheth, saying, "And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins ; and in Him is no sin." (1 John iii. 5.) Should any heretic cavil at this doctrine, let the Flesh itself make answer to him, "I was indeed of the earth, and by nature mortal, but subsequently was made the flesh of the Word ; and He who is the Word, and totally impassible, bare my passions." As the Word took flesh and was made man, so likewise we men are deified by the Word of God [St. John x. 34, 35 ; Ps. lxxxii. 6 ; 2 Pet. i. 4].

When we read of Christ, that He did, said, and suffered things that pertain to the body, we are to keep in mind that He who did, said, and suffered those things is God. Let us hold fast the true faith. No expressions in Holy Scripture are to be understood as signifying that the Son ever had not all things that the Father hath ; but those things which as God He hath, as the Son He asketh for. For that which He hath, He hath of the Father. He that giveth, and He that receiveth, must be two Persons ; one to give, the other to receive. In order to teach us that the Son is not the Father, and the Father is not the Son, such expressions as "it is given" (St. John xvii. 2, 4, 6, 7, 8) are employed. Thus we are instructed to avoid the error of Sabellius.

If the Son were one of the creatures of the world, He could by no means be the Heir of the



world. (Rom. iv. 13.) He that hath dominion over all things, cannot Himself be one of the things over which He hath dominion. But as the Saviour saith, "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (St. John v. 26); and, here, the word "given" denotes Sonship; the word "so" denotes equality. The Father, indeed, hath from none; but the Son hath from the Father. As the Godhead of the Father is, so is the Godhead of the Son.

A person who asks a question is not necessarily ignorant of the matter about which he asks. When "Jesus saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" the Scripture tells us, "This he said to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do." (St. John vi. 5, 6.) Deity cannot be ignorant of anything. Christ knew the thoughts of His disciples before they uttered them; He knew the hidden thoughts in the hearts of all men; He knew what was in man. Because He became man, He ceased not to be God; and because He was God, He was not the less truly and verily Man, God forbid!

Glory and power were given (St. John xvii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 19) to Christ by the Father, as Christ is Man, although as God He always had them; in order that God and man being united in the person of Christ, never to be divided, the grace given to mankind might be indefeasibly confirmed to them, and never lost as Adam lost it. But suppose, for argument's sake, that it really were,

as the heretics say ; and that the Divine Word, as it is the Word, receives, is glorified, is sanctified, riseth again, and that the Godhead of the Father and of the Son is not one : what then becomes of the hopes of all mankind, which are founded upon the fact that God and man are united in the person of Christ, and that the grace of God is given to man through the one Mediator, who is both God and man ? Then must men remain such as they were, naked, miserable, and dead, without part or lot in those things which are given unto the Son. But "the Word was made flesh," that, in the flesh, He might receive gifts for men.

Christ already had the things which He asked of the Father. He asked glory (St. John xvii. 1, 5); and after the resurrection, we see that He received power (St. Matt. xxviii. 18) : but before either of these occasions, and antecedently to them, He had said, "All things are delivered to me." (St. Luke x. 22.) When He asked glory, even then at the very time of asking it, He was the Lord of Glory ; even as Paul saith, "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.) He possessed already that which He asked for, as appears from His own words, "Glorify . . . . me . . . . with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (St. John xvii. 5.) He manifested forth His power, when He rebuked Satan, raised the dead, cast out devils, cured diseases, forgave sins. All these things He did by His own power, as the Word : and when the Word was made flesh, and became man, then



## St. Athanasius.

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in His human nature He received them. When He is said to receive "glory," and "honour and glory," as by St. Peter (1 Peter i. 21 ; 2 Pet. i. 17), this is spoken in respect of His human nature which He took. As man, He received that which, as the Word of God, He always had. Be not like the Jews who stoned Him because He said that He was God. He was true God in the flesh, and true flesh in the Word.

Turn to another topic. (St. Mark xiii. 32) "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The Maker of all worlds and times could not but know that time. He showed that He knew it by describing what events should precede it. But as the Son dwelling among men, as man, He did not reveal it. It was not the Divine purpose to reveal it. If any should ask why that day is concealed ; it becomes not us to ask the question, for "Who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ?" (Rom. xi. 34.) The Word could not be ignorant of the beginning and end of things which He had himself created. But as men were not to know the time of the end, so He standing amongst men, and speaking as one of them, said that He knew it not. It is as if one man should ask another, where a house was situated, and he to whom the question was put, should reply, "I may not tell you where it is, but I will describe to you the objects which you will see when you come near to it." Having said,

"No, not the angels which are in heaven," He ascends not to an higher degree, as if He had said, "Neither the Holy Ghost," or "Neither the Son of God;" but says simply, "Neither the Son," because the Son, being incarnate and made man, ignorance, and in particular ignorance of that thing then spoken of, appertained to the nature of man. It was no part of His ministry among men to tell them the day and hour of the end of the world; therefore He saith, "Neither the Son, but the Father." Nevertheless, showing that He knoweth all things that the Father knoweth, He saith (St. Luke x. 22), "No man knoweth . . . who the Father is, but the Son." If it be true, that He who alone knoweth the Father, knoweth not that day and hour, then, in that case, the Father knoweth it not. To such a height their audacious blasphemy riseth. Thus they even blaspheme against the Holy Ghost—a sin which hath never forgiveness. Had Christ not known the day and hour of the end of the world, it behoved Him to say, "Watch, for *I* know not when I shall come:" but he said, "Watch, for *ye* know not the day or the hour." (St. Matt. xxiv. 42, 44, 50.) When he said, "Neither the Son knoweth," He spake as a man, for He had taken upon Him man's nature: and to that nature ignorance of those things belongs. But being the Divine Word, He knew it well; and therefore He did not say, "I know not;" but, "Neither the Son." It is a secret thing, belonging to the Lord God, and not



revealed to any creature, much less to any man. Even the Son of Man, as such [as, *i.e.*, our prophet] knew it not ; although, being God, He knew it. As man, with men, He is hungry and thirsty, and suffereth ; even so, as man, with men, He knew not. Yet, being the Word and Wisdom of the Father He could not but know all things. The knowledge of the Father and of the Son is through the Son (St. Luke x. 23) ; and the Son, who knoweth all things, knoweth the Father ; than which knowledge there can be nothing greater or more perfect. In the same place where he said, "Neither the Son knoweth ;" He also said, "but the Father." Yet all that the Father knoweth the Son knoweth. Our Lord spoke thus to repress the curiosity of His disciples, and to prevent them from asking any further questions about the matter. There is nothing false in the Words of Christ, where He saith, "Neither the Son knoweth." He knew it ; for "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24) ; and He made it quite plain that He himself knew it, but He employed that form of speech, for the purpose of explaining to them that they were not to know it ; and as saying, "I indeed know it, but it is not for you to know it. If Antichrist should attempt to deceive you concerning the end of the world, remember that you have been forewarned." Christ hath said, "Neither the Son knoweth it." The day of the end of the world, and the day of each man's death, are kept concealed ; lest, if the time were known beforehand, needful preparation

should in the meanwhile be neglected. The end of the world comes to the individual at the day of his death. Accordingly the Lord said, "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come . . . . Therefore be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." (St. Matt. xxiv. 42, 44.) When God made enquiry of Adam (Gen. iii.), and of Cain (Gen. iv.) did not God know?

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man;" so Luke saith. (ii. 52.) Is this said of a common man, or of God clothed with humanity and flesh? Divine wisdom could not grow in wisdom; the Giver of all grace could not grow in grace; Infinite greatness could not grow greater. Christ, being God, could increase in nothing; but, being also very Man, the faculties of His human nature were developed and perfected by natural growth. He humbled Himself, and took a nature that could grow, in order that we might grow up towards God. The Evangelist carefully associates the growth of Christ with His age; but God is ageless—is eternal. As His human nature grew, His Divinity was more abundantly manifested in it: as an infant, He was carried; as a child, He tarried and disputed with the doctors in the temple; in His full age, He was acknowledged—first by Peter, afterwards by all—to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God." (St. Matt. xvi. 16, 20) Prov. ix. 1. As the temple of His body grew to perfection, it became more clearly manifest unto all men that His body was



the temple of God, and that God existed in His body. The Person was God, who had taken upon Himself human nature ; so that God and man is one Christ. The Word, who is infinitely perfect, cannot grow in perfection. The flesh is not wisdom ; but the flesh is made to be the body of wisdom. The human body and human soul of the Lord grew to perfectness ; but the Word, in so far as He is the Word, grew not.

Christ feared not death and hell ; but in order to deliver us from death and hell, He willingly underwent the pain and horror of dying. How should He be afraid of it, who could say, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (St. John x. 18.) Those human affections are never attributed to the Word, until after the time when "the Word was made flesh." He who spake as man, and suffered as man, is the same who uttered these words, "I and my Father are one" (St. John x. 31). Because the Creator condescended to take upon Him a created nature, they wickedly deny Him to be the Creator, and reckon Him among the creatures that He has made. He could not, unless He had taken a body, have undergone the suffering and death which is incidental to mortal man. The Word, as the Word, could suffer nothing, want nothing, and could not be forsaken by the Father, for He is ever in the Father. When it is said, He was troubled, He prayed ; these and such like things belong not at all to the Word, as the Word,

but to the flesh which the Word was made. The truth of His Humanity and the verity of His Divinity were in several instances simultaneously displayed.

He permitted Himself, for our sakes, to be betrayed and killed ; for clearly He who could drive away death from others, and raise others from the dead, could have preserved his own life, if He had so willed. But He suffered in the flesh in order that He might render flesh to be free from suffering and immortal ; men being made temples of the Word. Heresy is a hydra-headed monster ; as fast as one faithless and impious objection is answered, they raise two more. Thus to avoid the odium attaching to their statement—"There was a time when the Word was not," they say that He was made by the will and choice of the Father ; but their meaning is the same. They hide their heresy in a cloud of words, as a cuttle-fish conceals itself in the ink which it ejects. Where do they find a will prior and anterior to the Word of God ? Of the Word, it is written, "Who is the image of the invisible God (Col. i. 15) ; but of created things, which once were not, but came into being when God willed to create them, "Our God is in the heavens ; He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Ps. cxv. 3), and, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places" (Ps. cxxxv. 6). Before the creation of man God said, "Let us make man ;" but no antecedent will preceded the begetting of the Word,



who is begotten from everlasting of the Father. The generation of the Word is essential in the Divine nature, and is eternal, as the Godhead is eternal. The Word is co-eternal with the Father.

The Arian heresy savours of paganism. The Saviour Himself claims all things that the Father hath for His own, saying, "Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding; I have strength" (Prov. viii. 14). We must not think of God as of a man. The Prophet tells us that Christ is the "Counsellor, the Mighty God" (Is. ix. 6); and the Apostle St. Paul indicates Him to be, as the Word, so the Will of the Father, saying, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph. i. 5.)

As the Father is good by nature, and cannot be other than good; so also is the generation of the Son by nature, and therefore eternal, as the Godhead is eternal. At the Transfiguration the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," clearly showing by this manner of speech, that he is his Son by nature, and that in him is laid the will of those things which are pleasing to Himself. "In meekness," let us "instruct those that oppose themselves . . . . that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil." (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.) For meek and gentle is the Truth which everywhere thus crieth, "Though ye believe not me" on account of the cloke of my body, "believe the

works ; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him " (St. John x. 38) ; and, " I and my Father are one " (St. John x. 30) ; and, " He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." (St. John xiv. 9.) For the Lord dealeth mildly, and desireth that all men should be lifted up from their falls ; as is sung in the Psalms of David, " The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down." (Ps. cxlvi. 9.)

The exile of St. Athanasius in the desert had reached its closing period. He had been hunted from place to place for about five years. The entire term of this third banishment from his See lasted six years. Throughout the whole of that time, he had been labouring incessantly in writing treatises of all kinds to help the suffering Church, and in defence of the true faith. Besides this, he had been undergoing continual distress and fatigue in flying for his life from the face of his relentless persecutors. It might reasonably have been supposed that his strength was too much exhausted to bear the strain of a fresh effort.

A demand, however, for renewed exertion now arose from an unexpected quarter. His former friend, Macedonius, in his eager desire to avoid holding any tenet which could possibly be wrested in favour of the Arian heresy, was led on to adopt, and to publish, certain opinions concerning the Holy Ghost, which were directly subversive of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Athanasius was sixty years of age, and was harassed and worn



both in body and mind. Yet this new call found him equal to the occasion. In a letter addressed to Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, he clearly pointed out the seriousness of the danger which threatened the Catholic faith, in consequence of the views put forth by Macedonius ; and he counteracted them by arguments which could not be gainsaid. An abstract of this dissertation is here offered.

EPISTLE TO SERAPION.

*Of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost.*

Your letter was brought to me in the desert, where I was suffering bitter persecution. Some persons had been teaching that the Holy Ghost, not only was a creature, but that He was one of the ministering spirits, and differed only in degree from the other angels. The Arians denying the Son, deny also the Father ; these heretics speaking amiss concerning the Holy Ghost, speak amiss also concerning the Son ; both alike are guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Trinity.

How can they call the Holy Ghost, who has the same unity with the Son that the Son has with the Father, a creature ? They who divide the Holy Ghost from the Word, cannot keep the one Godhead in the Trinity. What sort of a Deity, therefore, is theirs, which is compounded of the Creator and a creature ? If they believed rightly concerning the Word of God, they would also believe rightly concerning the Holy Ghost, which proceedeth from the Father, which is the Spirit of

the Son, which is given by the Son to His disciples, and to all them that believe in Him. To "resist the Holy Ghost," as the great martyr Stephen spake (Acts vii. 51), is a sin that "hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (St. Matt. xii. 32.) Whence do ye derive such an error? from whom have ye heard it? What is the reason or the manner of it?

Misapplication was made of places in Scripture where the word "spirit" occurs. But spirit does not always mean the Holy Ghost; as, for instance, in Amos iv. 13, where it signifies "the wind." Invariably in Scripture, when the Holy Ghost is meant, the word Spirit has added to it, "of God," or "of the Father," or "from me," *i.e.*, from God, or it has the article, or it is said to be "of Christ," or "of the Son," or "Holy" is joined with it, or "the Comforter," or "of Truth," *i.e.*, of the Son who named himself "the Truth." When the term, "the Spirit," is used, the context determines the meaning. Paul saith to the Galatians (iii. 2), "This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Here it is the Holy Ghost given to the regenerate in baptism. Of the Lord, when he was baptized after the manner of men, on account of the flesh which He had taken upon him, it is said that the Holy Ghost descended upon Him. (St. Matt. iii. 16, St. Mark i. 10, St. Luke iii. 22, St. John i. 32-33.) This Spirit when he gave to His disciples, he said, "Receive ye the Holy



Ghost." (St. John xx. 22.) He had also said a little while before, "When the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (St. John xv. 26.) And in Divine worship joining Himself with the Father, and the Holy Ghost with the Father and Himself, He enjoined His disciples, "Go ye . . . . and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (St. Matt. xviii. 19.) [Seventeen passages in which the Holy Ghost is mentioned, are quoted. The writer then proceeds]. Thus universally in the Scripture the Holy Ghost is distinguished by certain adjectives which are coupled with the word "spirit." The spirit of man is sometimes spoken of ; the wind, too, is called spirit. Moreover, *spirit* is used to denote the *mind* of a speaker or writer ; as when we say, *the spirit* rather than *the letter* is to be observed. The word "spirit," indeed, has various significations.

What likeness is there between the Creator and a creature ? The spirit of man is renewed by the Holy Spirit, as it is written (Ez. xxvi. 36), "A new spirit will I put within you," but the renewing Spirit must be God.

Those heretics are divided amongst themselves ; some saying that the Son, others that the Holy Ghost is a creature. Where St. Paul saith to Timothy (1 Tim. v. 21), "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," they falsely infer, because the angels are

mentioned immediately after the Lord Jesus Christ, that therefore the Holy Ghost is a spirit like the angels, and of the same order, and that He is an angel, only greater than the rest. If after the Father and the Son are, as they pretend, the angels ; in that case, they associate the angels with the Father and the Son in the Holy Trinity ; and they fall into the impiety of Valentinus. But where can they find in Scripture the Holy Ghost called an angel ? He is named the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of sanctification, the Spirit of God, and sometimes The Spirit ; but, nowhere an angel. The angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister : and one of them—viz., Gabriel, said to the Virgin Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee." (St. Luke i. 35.) In Zechariah's vision of the candlestick (Zech. iv. 6), an angel spake to Zechariah, and told him about the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. The angel is not the Spirit : and the Spirit of which the angel speaks is the Holy Ghost, who is of one Godhead with the Father and the Son. The angels are in number thousands and tens of thousands : which one of them descended like a dove at the Baptism of Christ in the river Jordan ? The Scripture saith not that an angel descended, but that the Holy Ghost descended. (St. Luke iii. 22.) Christ promised not to send to His disciples an angel to be their comforter, but the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father. (St. John xiv. 26 ; xv. 26.)



The Holy and Blessed Trinity is undivided ; and wheresoever the Father is spoken of, together with Him is His Word ; and wheresoever the Son is spoken of, there also is the Spirit. Those men utter only the perverseness of their own hearts, whilst they make a pretence of quoting Scripture. It is useless to answer their foolish questions ; but they ought to be avoided, as heretics. The Father is from eternity, and is unbegotten. The Son, likewise, is from eternity, but is begotten. The Spirit is never in Holy Writ designated the Son. The Holy Trinity is incomprehensible, and cannot be described. Why should men refuse to believe things which they cannot explain ? It becomes those who do not understand these matters to be silent, and not to contradict the Scripture, which teaches that the Holy Trinity is undivided ; and that the Son is conjoined with the Father, and that the Holy Ghost cannot be separated from the Son. But it is impossible to speak worthily concerning such ineffable things as the doctrine of the Trinity. The mystery of the Holy Trinity cannot be explained. Solomon, who excelled all men in wisdom, said (Eccles iii. 11), " He hath set the world in their hearts, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." How much less the nature of the Maker ! Thou oughtest not to question, but to believe the Sacred Writings. Sufficient are the proofs which thou wilt find there.

The Father is Light, the Son is the Brightness

of the Father, the Holy Ghost causeth the brightness of the light to shine into our hearts. (Thus St. Paul saith, Eph. i. 17), "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." The Father is the Fountain, the Son is the River ; when we drink of the River, we drink of the Spirit ; for, "we have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) And when we drink the Spirit, we drink Christ ; for, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them ; and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4.) Receiving the Spirit of the Son, we are made sons ; for, saith the Apostle (Rom. viii. 15), "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption." "God only is wise" (Rom. xvi. 27) ; the Son is "the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24) ; the Holy Ghost is "Spirit of Wisdom" (Eph. i. 17). "The Father hath life in himself" (St. John, v. 26) ; the Son is "life" (St. John xiv. 6) ; we live by the gift of the spirit : "We know that he" (God) "abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John iii. 24). Who shall dare to separate one Person of the Holy Trinity from another ? Where one Person is, there all the Godhead is. If one Person dwelleth in us, the whole Trinity dwelleth in us. The knowledge of God is not gained by human reasoning ; but by faith, and prayer, and pious meditation. The Spirit given and sent by the Son is one and is Himself, and not many, or one out of many.



The Son cometh in the name of the Father; and He saith, "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name." (St. John xiv. 26). (St. John iv. 14, vii, 39) "The Lord said, the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. . . . But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe should receive." But that which giveth life to those that receive it, must be God; it cannot be any creature. The seal cannot be the thing sealed. and the unction cannot be the thing which is anointed. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 John iv. 13). But if the Spirit were a creature, He could not bring us into communion with God. If the Father, the Word, in the Holy Ghost, createth and reneweth all things, how can the Holy Ghost be one of the things created and renewed? The Spirit is the image of the Son; but if the Son be not a creature, His image cannot be a creature. They ask, if the Spirit is from God, why is He not the Son of God? The Son is the Son of the Father by eternal generation; the Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son by eternal procession. The Son is Divine, and is the Wisdom and the Power of God, and the Lord of glory; the Spirit is Divine, and is the Spirit of Wisdom, and of Power, and of glory; as Peter writeth, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." (1 Pet. iv. 14.) Thus the Trinity is perfected.

“The Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom. viii. 15), cannot be a creature, but must be divine, and of the same nature with the Son. The Godhead of the Holy Ghost is one with the Godhead of the Father. The Spirit is immutable, and hath no shadow of turning. Angels are not present in every place at once; but the Holy Ghost is omnipresent. The creatures are partakers of this Spirit. The Trinity is holy and perfect in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is the doctrine of the Catholic Church; and whosoever departs from it, cannot be called a Christian. The Father made all things, through the Word, by the Holy Ghost. The Lord sending forth His apostles, commanded them: “Go ye,” said He, “and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (St. Matt. xviii. 19.) Is there a Trinity or a Duality? By introducing a creature into the Trinity, ye destroy it. The Trinity is undivided, and never unlike itself. If the Holy Ghost be not God, there is not one Baptism, but two: one in the name of the Father and of the Son; and another, in the name of a creature—Angel. The blessed Paul did not divide the Trinity as you do, but ascribes all gifts to the God and Father, saying, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same *Spirit*; and there are differences of administrations, but the same *Lord*. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all.” (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6.)



We have the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son, and the communion of His Spirit. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. This Apostle does not use this form of speech to signify that diverse and distinct gifts are given severally by each person of the Trinity ; but that whatsoever is given is given by the Trinity ; and that all gifts come from one God. All things are done by the Word in the Holy Ghost. When holy men use this phrase, "Thus saith the Lord," they do it for no other cause than to show that the Spirit speaketh in them.

I now, according to the Apostolic Faith received from the fathers, have delivered these things, adding nought thereto ; but as I have learned, so have I written those things which are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures.

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While we are perusing this most excellent dissertation, we must surely be filled with wonder, as we recall to mind the situation of the writer when he produced it, and many other works as well. He was not sitting in a study surrounded with books and papers. But we must picture him to ourselves, in some retreat whither he had fled for refuge, and where he might feel himself for a little space secure from discovery, taking his seat on a stone or ledge of rock outside the cell of some faithful hermit, or by a "den or cave of the earth," with his writing materials ; and there, in the remote and solitary wilderness, indicting these marvellous discourses.

The manner of his return to Alexandria, after his six years of exile in the desert, affords a

remarkable example of the way in which Divine Providence overrules the crafty wiliness imagined by bad men, to bring about His own merciful and glorious decrees for the help of His saints, and for the benefit of His holy Church. The agent now employed appeared to be the most unlikely that could be conceived to effect the end in view. It was no friend of God, no lover of His Church and people. The present instrument for giving a temporary abatement to the afflictions of the people of the Lord was an enemy of all righteousness, a hater of Christ and of the Christian Religion: it was no other than Julian the Apostate. This strange monster, half madman, and wholly pagan, had become possessed of the supreme power in the State, and, inflamed with the most bitter enmity against everything connected with the name of the religion which he had renounced, his scheme was to weaken the influence of it by leaving the conflicting parties to unrestricted strife with one another. Holding himself completely aloof, and letting them alone to fight out their disputes amongst themselves, he hoped that Christendom thus divided would yield before the advancing revival of heathen superstitions and observances. Actuated by this unholy motive, he issued an edict giving permission to all exiled Bishops to return from their places of banishment, and re-visit their flocks, at the same time granting indulgence to men of all persuasions to act according to their own will and pleasure.

Athanasius availed himself of the opportunity



afforded by these proceedings of the Emperor. He emerged from his concealment, and made his appearance again in his own city, where he was hailed with general gladness, and welcomed with the liveliest joy. He re-entered Alexandria on the 22nd of February, in the year 362. The Churches were at once placed at his disposal, and the Arians were fain to solemnize their worship in obscure and unobserved places. George, the intruding Archbishop, had some little time before lost his life in a popular tumult.

Adversity had not daunted : prosperity did not elate this excellent man. He made no attempt to execute vengeance upon the enemies who had so cruelly used him. Contrariwise, in the true spirit of the Gospel of peace, he straightway applied himself to restore peace and quietness ; and to reconcile, if he possibly could, all who had been opposed to him. One of his first acts after his restoration to his See was to assemble a Synod at Alexandria. It consisted of about twenty Bishops who had been expelled from their Bishoprics, and had now resumed their place and authority. Although not imposing in point of numbers, the questions debated and decided at it were of great importance. These were chiefly three : the first concerned the reception into the Church of such as had been enticed or forced into heretical communion ; the second had relation to the Divinity of the Holy Ghost ; and the third was whether the acceptance of the orthodox doctrine might be deemed sufficient, in the case of those

who declined to use the words in which it was defined. Upon the first question the majority cited the parable of the Prodigal Son ; and resolved, that persons who had yielded to extreme pressure, but were now ready to renounce Arian tenets, should retain their ecclesiastical offices. Leaders or defenders of the heresy were to be admitted to Church Communion on condition of renouncing their error ; but were not permitted to retain their positions and preferments. On the second point the Synod declared that the Holy Ghost was of the same Substance and Divinity with the Father and the Son ; and that in the Trinity there was nothing of the nature of a creature. The determination arrived at upon the third point proved the moderating influence of Athanasius, and that he did not fight for words, but for realities. He maintained that whenever it was perfectly clear that opponents in a controversy were using words in different senses, and that from their hearts they were trying to express the same spiritual realities, the *word* might be dispensed with, or the use of it in different senses justified.

Other matters also occupied his attention during the brief period for which he was left unmolested. But notwithstanding the opinion apparently entertained, that his position was tolerably secure, his days of quietness were really very few ; and at the end of the year which witnessed his return the persecuted saint was once more an exile. We hasten on to relate the circumstances of his fourth exile and return.



## THE FOURTH EXILE.

Julian had hoped that by allowing unrestrained exercise to the passions of contending parties, he should impair the general influence of Christianity. He perceived, to his dismay, that the authority of Athanasius was uniting the Christians, and consolidating and confirming the power of that Holy Religion which he both hated and dreaded. His rage was lashed into fury by the conversion of several Greek, that is, heathen ladies of rank and distinction, through the preaching of St. Athanasius. He addressed a letter to Ecdicius the prefect, commanding that the Bishop should be expelled from the city before a specified date. The expressions which he uses betray the intensity of his irritation. He employs the most opprobrious epithets in speaking of the Saint ; and calls him "foe of the gods," a paltry manikin," "a meddler," and "a miscreant."

The emperor had sworn by Serapis, that if Athanasius was not gone from Alexandria by the 1st of December, he should demand a fine of a hundred pounds of gold from the officers of the prefecture. And the murder of the Bishop was more than obscurely hinted at.

The imperial orders were communicated to Athanasius on the 23rd of October. He did not wait to avail himself of the month's respite above mentioned ; but took his departure without delay. And his escape was made none too soon ; for there is sufficient evidence to conclude that other officers

quickly followed who were empowered to arrest and slay him. They did actually destroy with fire the greatest church in the city, with the evident intention of causing the death of the Bishop, whom they supposed to be hidden somewhere in it. His terrified and distressed followers now gathered round him in alarm and dismay : but he calmly said to them, "Let us retire for a while. This commotion will quickly terminate, it is a cloud which appears and then vanishes away."

Athanasius, with a few companions, entered a boat, and sailed up the river towards Thebes. The pursuit after him was hot, and he might easily have escaped into the wilderness, as the friends who accompanied him entreated him to do. But he baffled his pursuers by ordering his boat to be turned round, and to retrace its course down the stream. The fugitives soon met their enemies toiling up against the current. As they passed rapidly by, they were hailed by the party who were seeking them. "Where is Athanasius?" they cried. "He is near," was the reply ; and they passed on. They reached Chœran, the first station from Alexandria. There the Bishop landed, and remained concealed until the Easter of 363 A.D. About that time he removed to the vicinity of Antinoë. Many recluses dwelt in the caves which abound near this city. Pammon was their superior ; and Athanasius appears to have retired into one of these cells. During his residence there, Theodore of Tabeune, another illustrious abbot, came to visit him. The three



—Athanasius, Theodore, and Pammon—crossed the Nile in the dead of night to Hermopolis. They found the banks of the river crowded with bishops, priests, and monks to welcome them. Athanasius remained with them for some weeks, counselling and preaching to them. But his persecutors were on his track. He set out to return. The faithful monks laboured in dragging the vessel up the stream. In the course of this slow process they must have been in great peril. The heart of the great Archbishop, who had braved so many dangers, seems here to have sunk within him. Pammon encouraged his revered friend by reminding him of the blessedness of being accounted worthy to suffer and die for the name of the Lord Jesus. Calmed by the faith of his companion, he prayed for grace. He next began to enlarge on the near prospect of a violent death. Pammon and Theodore smiled at one another. He thought at first that they were smiling at him ; but they told him that he had nothing more to fear, because Julian was dead. This fact had been communicated to them by some supernatural means. The tidings were true. Julian had been slain in his war with the Persians on June 26, 363 A.D. His last words were, "O, Galilæan, thou hast conquered !" Jovian, one of the most distinguished generals of the army, a man who had continued steadfast in his profession of Christianity, and who was favourable to the orthodox faith as it had been enunciated by the Council of Nicæa, was summoned to assume the vacant purple.

The reign of this good Emperor was short : it lasted little more than seven months. On Jovian's accession to the throne, Athanasius reappeared in Alexandria, and a letter of Jovian, couched in terms highly appreciative of the Bishop's character, confirmed him in his recovered position and authority.

When Jovian died, his successor, Valentinian I., assigned the east to his brother Valens. Valentinian was orthodox, but Valens was an Arian. For a while the Bishop of Alexandria was undisturbed. But in the year 367 an imperial mandate was sent to Egypt, which involved the banishment of Athanasius. This was his fifth exile.

#### FIFTH EXILE.

Desiring to avoid giving occasion for an uproar of the people, this good Bishop and faithful Confessor, withdrew in the night of October 6th, and concealed himself for four months in his father's tomb, which was in the neighbourhood of the city. When that comparatively brief interval had passed, the Emperor, actuated by some unexplained motive, sent a notary to Alexandria with an order to reinstate Athanasius on his episcopal throne. And for the fifth and last time, he was restored to his Church, amid general rejoicing, on the 1st day of February.

His life was prolonged for about five years more. It does not fall within the scope of this narrative to relate in detail the transactions in which he was henceforward engaged. To the end



he was conscientious and assiduous in his attention to all the duties of his station and office. And then he peacefully drew his last breath in his own home, and his body was laid to rest in his native city, in the Church which he had served with such unflinching fidelity ; and his soul departed to rest in Paradise, there to be with Christ, and to enjoy the society of the saints, awaiting the glorious resurrection.

The witness borne by this great Doctor of the Church, "an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures," to the Books constituting the Canon of Holy Scripture is of the highest value. He gives, in one of his Festal Letters, written when he was near the close of his life, a catalogue of the Inspired Books, carefully distinguishing them from all others, even from such as might be read in the Church "for example of life and instruction of manners." This catalogue has been usually called the Canon of St. Athanasius ; and it corresponds substantially with our own present Canon. "These," he says, "are the fountains of salvation, that he who thirsteth may be satisfied with the words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness."

"Athanasius's Creed," or "the Creed of Saint Athanasius," being one of the Three Creeds (the other two being the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed) enjoined by the Church of England, in the eighth of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, "to be thoroughly received and believed : for they may be proved by most certain

warrants of holy Scripture," some particular notice of it may reasonably be expected here. Every subject connected with it has recently been thoroughly considered in *A Critical Dissertation on the Athanasian Creed*, by the Rev. G. D. W. Ommanney, M.A., Prebendary of Wells. In that book the reader is furnished with all the information concerning this Creed, which has been collected up to the present date. The learned and pious writer does not, it is true, incline to the opinion that the Creed was composed by the great Saint whose name it bears, and whose life and labours we have been reviewing. He is at pains to produce arguments in favour of attributing it to another origin. The judgment of so competent an authority is worthy of all respect. It may, however, be excusable deferentially to withhold assent to his conclusion. Neither he nor others who adopt the same or similar views, are able, from the nature of the case, to support their contention with anything stronger than conjecture. Circumstantial evidence is only admissible in the absence of positive testimony. Experience in the affairs of life teaches us that plausible theories may be formed, in which there may be nothing inconsistent with known facts; and yet no substantive proof can be offered of them, and they may, after all, be quite imaginary and illusive. Now, on the other hand, we have the tradition of the Church through all the centuries, until comparatively modern times, ascribing the Creed to Athanasius. It was never,



during all those ages, supposed to have been the work of another hand—except in a very few instances, where the name of *Anastasius* appears to have been written by mistake for *Athanasius*.

At the commencement of the ninth century, that is to say, in or about the year 800 A.D., the Athanasian Creed was extant, and, what is more, it was extant in its integrity; complete, as we have it now, the same document which we have in our Prayer Books and say in our Churches. Consequently it is clear that it must have been extant not only at the beginning of the ninth century, but some considerable time before. At that period it was certainly believed to be the work of St. Athanasius. Upon this point the evidence is perfectly strong and explicit: there can be no doubt about it. The Creed is, over and over again, ascribed to him, cited as his, described in such words as these: "The Faith of Athanasius," "The exposition of the Faith, which the holy Athanasius composed," "The blessed Athanasius, the most reverend bishop of the city of Alexandria . . . . in the exposition of the Catholic Faith, which that eminent doctor himself composed, and which the universal church confesses." The divines of the early part of the ninth century had among them men of learning; and it is impossible to suppose that they could have regarded the Creed of St. Athanasius as handed down through successive ages from a man who had been dead more than four hundred years, had it been the production of a recent age, the

preceding century or two. They knew, at least, that the tradition respecting its authorship was not of yesterday.

The writer, from whose most valuable book the remarks last made are taken, has himself afforded us a piece of information, which may not unreasonably be thought to indicate the time and manner of the production of this Formulary. There exists an Irish manuscript containing, among other things, the Athanasian Creed accompanied by a short preface, written partly in Irish and partly in Latin. It records a tradition that the Creed was composed at the Council of Nice by three bishops, Eusebius, Dionysius, and another, whose name was unknown to the writer. But, so the document proceeds, "it is said that it is the whole synod that made it, for it was it which published it." Now if there should be some truth in this tradition, nothing could be more unlikely, not to say, impossible, than that such a document should be drawn up and published, without the chief hand in it being that of the deacon and secretary of the Bishop of Alexandria, young in years, but one of the most prominent members of the Council, the illustrious St. Athanasius himself.

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